

Summarised inspection findings

Lochpots School Nursery

Aberdeenshire Council

16 September 2025

Key contextual information

Lochpots School Nursery is based within a separate building adjacent to Lochpots Primary School. There is one main playroom and children have free flow access to two enclosed outdoor areas. Additionally, the nursery children access primary school facilities such as the gym hall, dining hall, and playground. Children attend from the age of three until starting primary school. The setting is registered for 24 children aged 3-5 years at any one time. Children can access their 1140 hours in a variety of attendance patterns between 8 am and 6 pm for 52 weeks each year. Currently, there are 34 children on the register. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the setting. The early years senior practitioner has responsibility for day-to-day management of the nursery and is the named manager. The wider team includes an early years lead practitioner and seven early years practitioners. In the past seven months the nursery has experienced significant changes in staffing.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Practitioners have developed strong relationships with children and their families. Across the setting there is a welcoming, warm, nurturing ethos. This helps children to feel safe and secure. Most children turn take and share resources in a developmentally appropriate manner. Practitioners know children very well as individuals and use skilful, sensitive approaches to support a few children who require assistance to manage their emotions and behaviour.
- The majority of children are happy and motivated as they engage in planned learning experiences. Practitioners have recently introduced 'Roni the Rights Fairy' to help children understand their rights in a meaningful, play context. This results in a few children using the language of rights throughout play. Children's curiosity, creativity and enquiry are enriched within the well-developed stimulating and purposeful outdoor space. As identified, practitioners should continue to develop the indoor environment to provide rich and challenging experiences for all children. Children have the opportunity to undertake roles of responsibility as outdoor safety officers and snack helpers. This results in most children being independent and able to demonstrate responsible citizenship.
- Practitioners interact positively with children and use praise well. The majority of practitioners use open-ended questions and commentary well to support children's learning through play. This enables the majority of children to sustain their interest for longer periods of time. Senior leaders should continue to ensure that all practitioners are consistent in their use of open-ended questioning to extend and deepen children's learning.
- Children use the interactive whiteboard to create drawings and develop their numeracy skills as they explore shape and pattern. Practitioners should continue to extend and embed the use of technology to enhance learning opportunities.

- Practitioners have recently started using a new planning format. They plan and evaluate children's learning weekly using a blend of intentional and responsive planning. They use the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and national practice guidance well to support their planning. As a result, planned experiences are of high quality, developmentally appropriate and responsive to children's interests. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners as they implement the new planning system and to include children's voice as part of the planning process. This should ensure that children's opinions on their learning are valued and that they are involved in planning their own learning.
- The majority of practitioners observe children's learning on a regular basis. They record these observations through comments and photographs. Practitioners are at the very early stages of capturing significant learning and skills in online profiles. Senior leaders regularly use local authority guidance to support practitioners to track children's learning in literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing. With support, practitioners are becoming more confident to make professional judgements about children's individual progress and next steps to inform future learning. Practitioners should now ensure that they are recording and evidencing children's learning more frequently to demonstrate clear progress. This should help them to recognise promptly the children who require additional support.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- The majority of children make satisfactory progress in communication and early language. They talk with confidence to adults and their peers. The majority of children independently access a wide range of books both indoors and outdoors. They are beginning to show increasing detail in their drawings. Children engage in a few mark making opportunities across the playroom. These include writing their own name and other words. Children would benefit from a wider range of opportunities to mark make in a meaningful context to develop their skills.
- The majority of children make satisfactory progress in early mathematics. Children confidently count numbers 0-10 at block play and identify a few two-dimensional shapes. Children are beginning to investigate volume using objects within the water tray. A few children use a range of tools for measuring. For example, rulers and measuring tapes. Most children are ready to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts such as money and information handling across a range of real-life contexts.
- Almost all children make satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. Most children benefit from an unhurried lunchtime which is supporting them to develop their social skills. Children confidently access outdoor play. They experience a wide range of opportunities to develop their gross motor skills as they climb and balance on apparatus with skill and enthusiasm. Children understand the importance of hygiene and are able to wash their hands. They are learning to brush their teeth properly through well-planned daily fun experiences.
- The majority of children make satisfactory progress over time in relation to their age and stage of development across most areas of the curriculum. They participate in a wide range of experiences to develop their skills. Practitioners need to focus on building on children's significant learning to support further this progress.
- Practitioners encourage parents to share their child's achievements from outwith the setting in their learning journal. Staff display these on the 'proud cloud'. Practitioners should now ensure that children's achievements are referred to more regularly with children. They should support them to talk confidently about the skills that they are developing and to identify themselves as learners.
- Practitioners know children and families very well and have a good understanding of the socio-economic context of the setting. Senior leaders signpost families for support to other agencies

when required. Practitioners support children who require additional help with their learning well. Senior leaders support practitioners, to create plans with clear targets and strategies to ensure children make the best progress in their development. Practitioners should use data from their observations to identify these children promptly. This should accelerate the progress children make. Senior leaders have started to share a variety of data with the nursery team. They should now consider how they can start to use this data more effectively to support outcomes for children and families.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.