

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Margaret's RC Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare – (nursery class attached to a primary school)**

**Angus Council**

**SEED No: 5306027**

**24 August 2017**

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**PSNC evaluation: Satisfactory**

**Primary evaluation: Satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
- *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
- *Implementing improvement and change*

#### **PSNC**

- The setting's vision, values and aims were created in 2016. This involved reviewing and refreshing the aims which was done as a setting team and shared with children and families. These appropriately reflect the setting's aspirations to provide a high quality experience of early learning and childcare for all children. As the school moves forward with its improvement agenda, it will be important to continue to review these through consultation and make adjustments where appropriate to reflect the needs of the families attending.
- Practitioners are reflective about their practice and about the learning experiences of all children. They make decisions throughout their day to day practice that lead to improvements in the setting environment and the progress of individual children. Overall, self-evaluation in the setting is at early stages. These processes now need to be more rigorous and robust in order to help practitioners identify what is working well and what needs to be improved. The team would benefit from using national practice documents more routinely and effectively to support this process.
- Practitioners are supported by a visiting senior practitioner who supports aspects of the setting such as planning for children's learning. The headteacher also meets regularly with practitioners and spends time in the playroom which allows her to carry out informal monitoring and discuss the needs of individual children and families. These processes would now benefit from being developed further in order to more effectively feed into the setting self-evaluation and support well informed change.
- Practitioners are encouraged to develop their own expertise through training opportunities that are chosen based on the needs of the setting and individuals. They are reflective about these opportunities and are beginning to consider more deeply the impact on practice and learning outcomes. Practitioners are also supported to take forward ideas and to use initiative to enhance the running of the setting. For example, they take responsibility for planning children's learning, reviewing policies and developing approaches to movement skills. As these roles continue over time, it would be useful to review their impact on children's experiences and progress.
- The setting's improvement plan takes account of local priorities and sets out specific targets for development. Regular discussion between practitioners and the headteacher also

allows for progress to be assessed. In a few areas, progress has still to achieve the desired impact. This should be kept under close review in order that these plans continue to support change and the intended outcomes for improvement.

### *Primary*

- Staff are committed to achieving the best outcomes for all children in the school.
- The substantive headteacher has been absent for several months and there is an acting headteacher in place. The effective leadership of both the substantive and acting headteachers is appreciated by staff, children and parents. They both are seen as dedicated practitioners who are keen to ensure that the school continues to improve so that all children achieve to their potential.
- All staff in the school are deeply committed to shared values which include a distinct Catholic ethos. The vision, values and aims for the school were implemented several years ago. These should now be revisited to ensure that they are still relevant to the school and the children who attend. The vision, values and aims should be shared with all stakeholders, including staff, children, parents and other community partners. Everyone should have ownership of these.
- An increasingly appropriate reflection of the multi-lingual and multi-cultural context of school is becoming evident in class work and displays. However, more could still be done to acknowledge the nature of the diversity in the school. A good start has been made with the Polish National Day display, although it would be helpful if it could be sited in a more public area.
- Staff in St Margaret's RC Primary School, feel empowered by the substantive and acting headteachers to take forward and lead initiatives. These include the new reading approach, the Reading Challenge and the development of physical education.
- Staff are enabled to attend appropriate training opportunities to develop themselves and to take forward the school's priorities. Staff have also helped to review the school's improvement plan.
- Parents feel very involved in the school's improvement journey and are consulted on this in a range of ways. For example, the school consulted parents on how they would spend their allocation from the Pupil Equity Fund. The Parent Council was also asked to comment on the school improvement plan.
- The acting headteacher has ensured that time is now being protected for professional dialogue between staff. This has been achieved in a number of ways including a whole-school assembly held by the headteacher and priest and class cover by the NCCT teacher.
- Teachers take responsibility for implementing change in the school, realising that they can make a significant difference in the classroom.
- Innovation is positively encouraged in classes. It is also realised that links with other schools will be important to help teachers to develop and extend their experience and to check their ideas with a wider range of practitioners.

- Teachers continually reflect on their practice, both individually and together. However, they are aware that this now needs to be done more formally. This applies to reviewing their work in class with children but also to moderating their assessment standards with each other.
- Scheduled lesson observations are made by the headteacher. These are appropriately focused and include helpful next steps for teachers to follow up on.
- Staff discussion of improvement priorities led to the introduction of the growth mindset approach, where children are encouraged to have a more positive and resilient approach to problem solving in a range of situations. This approach has had a big impact on school staff, children and parents. Parents report that their children have been observed using it at home and they now give up less readily when something is not going well.
- The school should now develop more effective strategies to monitor and evaluate the impact of changes on the outcomes for children.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**PSNC evaluation: Satisfactory**

**Primary evaluation: Good**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences 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 teaching*
- *Effective use of assessment*
- *Planning, tracking and monitoring*

### **PSNC**

- Practitioners have positive relationships with children and families who attend the setting. They listen well to children and respond to their different levels of communication with care and respect. As a result, children are observed to be settled and approach practitioners for help as needed. They show engagement in their play and make choices about where they would like to learn. The majority of children show sustained interest in their chosen activities and are independent within the environment. They particularly enjoy working with malleable materials, creative resources and active play equipment. Children's outdoor learning experiences now need to be a focus for continuous improvement. Practitioners have identified the need to develop the outdoor environment to promote children's learning across the curriculum on a daily basis. This should include a focus on the use of materials which promote curiosity, problem solving and inquiry.
- A variety of planning approaches are used by practitioners to ensure children access learning opportunities appropriate to their developmental stage. These include responsive planning methods which encourage children to take forward their interests as a group. 'Mind maps' are used as a tool to find out what children already know about a topic and what they would like to find out. Practitioners consult with children and take account of their views. They are now exploring the best way to take these topic books forward and should ensure that they provide appropriate depth to children's learning. Children would benefit from more focused conversations about their individual learning, to help them review their achievements and plan for what they might learn next. This will support children to reflect on themselves as learners.
- Practitioners are kind and responsive to children and support their individual play interests well. It is clear that they value their ideas. They use questions well to promote and extend children's thinking and build confidence. Children have the time and space to revisit their learning and to extend this over time. The team would now benefit from exploring the different learning styles and developmental stages of children attending in more detail in order to provide appropriate depth and challenge. This could include work around schemas in children's play. The use of digital technologies should also be considered in order to make best use of these tools to enhance children's learning.

- Children's individual folders document their learning over time. These include observations of play, examples of children's work and plans for next steps in learning. Practitioners use their observations to identify what children might learn next and regularly review each child's progress. As a result, they know each child well as an individual learner. Children talk with enthusiasm about their past learning experiences when accessing these folders and are encouraged to make valuable contributions, along with their parents. As these develop, children's involvement in documenting and reflecting on their individual learning should be strengthened.
- Regular informal conversations and planned meetings allow parents the opportunity to find out more about their child's learning and progress. Frequent communication between practitioners and families means that information is shared effectively and used to plan for children's care and learning in a way that meets their needs.

### *Primary*

- The Catholic ethos and inclusive culture of the school is demonstrated in positive relationships between staff and pupils around the school. Children are extremely well-motivated and keen to learn and this is shown through their enthusiasm for learning activities in and out of class.
- In general, learning activities are sufficiently challenging and well-paced to engage and motivate children. However, in a few lessons children can find themselves following a scheme of work which includes too much overlearning and repetition of examples, particularly in mathematics when a textbook is being used. Children would benefit from alternative materials being used to place activities in real life contexts and reflect the unique nature of the school and its community.
- Children find the use of digital technology in lessons motivating, particularly when accessing activities on laptop computers. Better and more frequent use could be made by children of the interactive whiteboards in each classroom beyond the occasional use by small groups.
- Children are articulate, enthusiastic and confident, and would benefit from having greater opportunity to lead learning in classes. They already work well using the KWL approach (what I know, what I would like to know, what I have learned) when projects or topics are being planned. These enable children to participate in the topic planning process and to acknowledge any prior learning they are bringing to the task. The school should also consider the re-introduction of specific groups for children, including the pupil council and the eco committee, which provide valuable opportunities for children to develop their leadership skills and other relevant skills for learning, life and work.
- The school is considering extending opportunities for learning through play for the youngest children in primary. Staff are aware that children should not miss out on this important approach to learning.
- Teachers are particularly clear in their explanations and instructions and are respected by children. They ensure that learners in their multi-stage classes are having their needs met and regularly check on their understanding. They skilfully organise multiple activities which include all learners working at appropriate levels, engaging each of these groups in turn to assess their understanding and check their progress. They then introduce the next activity. Children appreciate the feedback they get from teachers and say that this helps them to improve their learning.

- Teachers are inclusive in their practice and they know their children extremely well. Teaching in the school features good, engaging practice, including meeting the needs of all learners. This is often supported by placing children in ability or age related groups, which change according to the activity which is being undertaken. This teaching is supported by the vision, values and aims which appear in the school handbook. The school uses digital technology well for particular activities and to provide aspects of enhancement for more able children, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers could make better use of the unique context of the school, including the wide range of ethnicities and languages represented by children, to create motivating and enriching learning activities.
- Children are encouraged to set learning targets for themselves and these are written in the Home Link Book. Progress against these targets is reviewed by children several times during the year. Children also confidently use 'learning ladders' in class to self-assess their progress in different areas of the curriculum. These range from 'I can't do it' through 'I can do it' to 'I can teach it'.
- Teachers use a range of different assessment approaches to check on children's progress. This was recently expanded by the use of 'cold' and 'hot' testing, done at the beginning and end of programmes of study. This shows children how much they have learned.
- Teachers, children and their parents acknowledge that attitudes to testing have changed since the school began to use growth mindset techniques. Children have been encouraged to continue to try to master difficult approaches and this has increased their determination and built their resilience. This is supported by motivational phrases displayed around the school. Parents have witnessed their children not giving up when trying something difficult at home and repeating these phrases.
- Teachers use their planning folder to plan across curriculum areas. This includes termly and weekly plans. There are some areas which would benefit from greater attention including health and wellbeing, technology and expressive arts (other than by visiting specialists). The school is aware that more work is required to ensure that children have an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum.
- Teachers plan carefully and include learning intentions, success criteria and learning activities. Within planning there is also an assessment column, but this is not currently being used consistently. Informal discussions and reflection take place on a regular basis. However, staff understand that it would be appropriate and helpful to reflect more formally on lessons and how successful they have been.
- The school is developing a more coherent approach to monitor and evaluate children's progress. Teachers now hold regular planning meetings with headteacher to review their work and how well children's needs are being met. The achievement overview document will be helpful in this regard. The school also uses a number of standardised assessment approaches to check children's progress. More work remains to be done regarding recording, analysing and improving the overall attainment of children in the school. The school also is aware that there is more to do to improve moderation of standards, both within the school and also involving other schools, and is working to achieve this.

## 2.2 Curriculum: theme 2: Learning Pathways and Development Pathways

### **PSNC**

- The setting's curriculum is firmly based on children learning through play. Children are seen as capable learners with an active role in contributing to their own learning. Learning pathways are appropriate to the developmental stages of children and recognise the importance of promoting relationships and wellbeing. Practitioners make use of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan for children's learning and to ensure breadth across the curriculum. There is an appropriate focus on supporting children to develop their skills in numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing.
- A range of planned learning experiences delivered to children enhance the curriculum. These include shared physical education and French sessions with children from the P1 class. Regular use of the local community also helps to enhance children's learning experiences and knowledge of the world around them. This could now be built on by extending children's understanding of their role in looking after the environment and sustainability.
- Planning arrangements include consulting with children in a way that responds to their interests and helps build on prior learning. Children are supported to explore their ideas and the flexible structure of the session allows for children to extend their play.
- Positive steps have been made to promote continuity and progression across the early level through working with P1 staff on transition arrangements and aspects of planning. This work should be built upon to develop a shared early learning pedagogy that reflects current thinking and best practice.

### **Primary**

- The school has created 'learning pathways' in a number of curriculum areas including literacy, numeracy and modern languages. These pathways are based around the Angus Council's standards which teachers use. They are also based on the experiences and outcomes and on the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. The structure of the pathways is: First I can, Next I can, Then I can. These pathways are designed to support planning, monitoring of coverage of curriculum experiences and outcomes, differentiation and assessment. Teachers either use these pathways to assess children's progress or to plan lessons. They are currently used differently in different classes. The school therefore needs to agree how the existing pathways are to be used. It is unclear how flexible these learning pathways are. Creating a more flexible approach could be the next step for developing the pathways as the school has such a variety of children from different backgrounds, with different interests and abilities. It would also be helpful to have specific pathways for Health and Wellbeing. They should be developed to incorporate the National Benchmarks.
- The school could do more to improve personalisation and choice in the curriculum through designing appropriate learning pathways for children. The school should also review the use of interdisciplinary learning which can be an appropriate way to develop learning pathways for children.
- All staff take responsibility for developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum as well as digital literacy. Children demonstrate skills in these areas

across a variety of meaningful contexts at a level appropriate to their own stage of development.

## 2.7 Partnerships: theme 3: Impact on learners – Impact on children and families

### **PSNC**

- Parents are valued as key partners within the setting and encouraged to become involved in a variety of ways. They attend for stay and play sessions, support outings and also help to deliver the curriculum by teaching languages and sharing hobbies and skills.
- Strong communication links between setting and home help to keep parents informed about their child's learning. These include daily conversations, planned meetings and newsletters that give parents information about what children are learning and how they can become involved. Booklets about supporting different areas of children's learning such as numeracy and early writing are also available which provide ideas for continuing learning in a home context. The variety of home links could now be developed further.

### **Primary**

- Parents appreciate the school's approaches to involve them in their children's work. They feel that the school works hard to keep them up to date with current events through newsletters, notes and texts sent directly to their mobile phones. There is also a social media page which is run by the Parent Council. Parents enjoy the wide range of events held in school to which they are invited, including Christmas and Easter events, fun days, school sports, transition meetings, parents' evenings and prize-giving.
- The Home Link Diary travels between school and home daily, giving details of homework and special events. There is space for parental comment, which is always acknowledged by teachers. Parents feel that the school gives more homework than other schools and generally agree that they like this. The Home Link Book details what has been achieved and is sent home three times per year. It is also a way that successes achieved at home can be shared more widely.
- Parents feel particularly welcomed in the school and think that the 'open door' policy works well. They are able to speak to a member of staff if they have particular matters they wish to discuss.
- The substantive headteacher has given parents home access to educational websites and they appreciate this as a way of getting more involved in their child's education. The school may wish to consider ways in which it can develop family learning further.

## 2.1: Safeguarding

- 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

**PSNC evaluation: Good**

**Primary evaluation: Good**

This indicator reflects on the setting's or school's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality*

#### **PSNC**

- There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere within the setting and children are valued as unique individuals with their own talents, skills, needs and rights. Practitioners have successfully established relationships of trust and respect with children and families. There is a strong sense of community, shared values and expectations.
- Practitioners model kind and respectful interactions with children and other adults and are mindful of the need to create a calm and purposeful learning environment. The team has a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of *Getting It Right for Every Child* and ensure all children are supported to feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. They have also begun to share these indicators with parents. Practitioners should now continue this work with the children to help give them the language to express their feelings and experiences.
- Positive behaviour is promoted by encouraging children to be respectful of each other and to consider the feelings of others. Children's self-esteem and confidence is a priority for practitioners who encourage the building of early friendships. As a result, children are mostly able to cooperate during play and show empathy towards their friends. The majority of children are able to share resources and take turns with little support. Practitioners could now develop their systems for recognising children's positive behaviour in line with their good practice in restorative approaches.
- Children are encouraged to be active participants in their own learning experiences and to make choices. This is supporting them to become confident individuals with a sense of ownership over their play and learning. Children are encouraged to participate in the life of the setting, for example by being the 'special helper' and helping with daily routines such as preparing snack.
- Practitioners keep up to date with developments in early learning and childcare in order that they fulfil their statutory duties. They are particularly mindful of their responsibility to promote children's wellbeing. Practitioners use information about individual children to form effective personal plans which are regularly reviewed with parents. Children who face barriers to their learning are well supported and links are made with other professional agencies where appropriate. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop their

knowledge of nurturing approaches and how young children form relationships with key adults.

- Information relating to the circumstances of individual children is used well to plan for their care and learning and to promote equity and inclusion. Practitioners are aware of their responsibility to promote diversity and challenge discrimination through their work with children and families.

### *Primary*

- The school is clearly focused on improving the wellbeing of all children who attend it. Teachers know children well, including those in their own and other classes. Staff and partners feel particularly valued, both by the substantive headteacher and currently by the acting headteacher.
- Relationships between school staff, and with parents and the wider community, are positive and supportive. These are founded within a common focus on making the best possible provision for children in the school within an all-embracing Catholic ethos. Parents feel that they and their children are welcome, whether or not they are of the Catholic faith.
- Children report that they feel safe, nurtured, respected, responsible and included. Relationships between children are extremely positive and exist regardless of ethnic background, language, age or sex. Children play well with each other in the playgrounds around the school and work well together in their classes.
- Health and wellbeing would benefit from greater emphasis in the curriculum. In P3-P6, health and wellbeing is only planned for in relation to physical activity. In P1-3 children have been discussing their feelings and are experiencing some of the health and wellbeing curriculum through Religious and Moral Education and topic work. The school is aware that it needs to check the coverage of experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence in this area of the curriculum – and others - across all levels to ensure that children are experiencing an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum. Children have some understanding of the wellbeing indicators, which are displayed in the school. However, they would benefit from them being given a greater emphasis in lessons.
- The school meets its statutory duties effectively, including those relating to child protection, provision of quality physical education and meeting additional support needs.
- Attendance at St Margaret's RC Primary School is above the national average. The school has had no exclusions in the recent past. There are no children who have been formally identified as having additional support needs. There are no children who are looked after and accommodated, or looked after at home. There are no children who come from SIMD deciles 1 or 2. The school receives a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding from the Scottish Government.
- 56% of the school roll consists of children who have English as an additional language. The school is well aware of the needs of these children and the range of languages which they speak or hear at home. The school celebrates this diversity and is beginning to use it as a focus for the curriculum, for example through the Polish National Day celebrations. The school is aware that it could now do more to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of its children, enriching the education of all pupils.

- The school has a range of strategies to meet the needs of children. It has introduced language programmes which have proved to be helpful approaches for children with English as an additional language, as well as other children in the class. Classroom assistants works with individuals who are developing their reading, as does the headteacher and other volunteer parents. The school also works effectively with partner agencies to help meet children's learning needs. These agencies include educational psychology, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and English as an additional language (EAL) services. EAL services provide sensitive direct support for children who are in the early stages of acquisition of English language. They also provide helpful advice and consultation for class teachers.
- Specialist devices such as writing slopes are used in classes where they are appropriate for children's needs, allowing them to take part in activities more easily.
- More able learners are given more challenging work, although this can sometimes be repetitive and uninteresting. The school plans to work with its linked secondary school to plan appropriate work for more able children, particularly in mathematics.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners*

#### Primary

##### Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The school has recently created an overview of children's attainment across the school. Most children are attaining appropriately in literacy and numeracy. However, the school does not yet have collated information on the levels which children have achieved across the curriculum. Most children are predicted to be on track to achieve the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level in both literacy and numeracy.
- Standardised assessments used in literacy and numeracy show that children are making steady progress in both literacy and numeracy, and this agrees with teacher professional judgement. The process of bringing together professional judgement and standardised assessment results has recently been implemented in the school.
- 56% of pupils have English as an additional language. Their overall attainment is not tracked as a cohort. They form the majority of the school population and they are at different levels of language acquisition. Almost all of them are making good progress from their previous levels of attainment.
- There are no looked after children in the school. A few children have individualised educational programmes (IEPs) due to learning or social needs but they are not tracked as a cohort. There are no children in SIMD deciles 1 or 2. The school has tracked levels of attainment related to SIMD deciles and there is no clear pattern, nor is there an obvious poverty-related attainment gap.

##### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy.
- The school's attainment data and professional judgements correctly identify that most children in P2 and P3 are making good progress towards achieving the first level by P4. The majority of children in P5 and P6 are on track to achieve second level by the end of P7 or before.

##### Listening and talking

- Children in P1-3 talk confidently about their learning and about their work in class. Younger children listen attentively to stories and answer questions confidently. Older children are developing skills of reading aloud with appropriate intonation and expression. Children in P1-P3 take turns effectively, follow simple instructions and are developing their vocabulary,

appropriate to their level of English language acquisition. Children in P4-P6 can listen to instructions and carry them out. They also respect the views of others and apply appropriate verbal and non-verbal techniques when listening to their classmates such as nodding, smiling and waiting patiently for their response. Across stages, children would benefit from greater opportunity to discuss issues in class.

### **Reading**

- Children in P1-P3 are developing their reading skills, sometimes with support from other staff such as the classroom assistant and the headteacher. They read familiar texts confidently. Younger children are benefiting from a structured approach to decoding unfamiliar words. Children in P4-P6 can identify and discuss their favourite author and understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They also understand about different genres of writing. Most children can read familiar and unfamiliar texts confidently and with expression. Children in P3-P6 are involved in the reading challenge and experiencing reading a wide range of genres of writing. They confidently contribute to school assemblies and masses.

### **Writing**

- Children in P1-P3 are developing their writing skills and spell most commonly used words correctly. They can discuss their feelings and express them in writing or in pictures. Children in P4-P6 have developed their writing in a range of contexts, which have recently included letter writing, poetry, writing about a holiday, newspaper article and factual writing about the Pope. They write neatly and accurately with appropriate spelling and punctuation.

### **Attainment in numeracy and Mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy.
- The school's attainment data and professional judgements correctly identify that the majority of children in P2 and P3 are making satisfactory progress towards achieving the first level by P4. The majority of children in P5 and P6 are also on track to achieve second level by the end of P7 or before.

### **Number, money and measurement**

- Children in P1-3 have been developing their skills in mental mathematics. They are working to develop their skills in skip-counting and multiplication. Children in P4-P6 have a good understanding of time, both in relation to the 12 and 24 hour clock. They can explain which coins are required to make up a specific amount of money. They have been working hard on multiplication but would benefit from more opportunity to use these skills in real life situations. They have done exercises in estimation of length and weight but have difficulty transferring these skills to real-life problem solving.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Children in P1-P3 are developing their skills in symmetry. Children in P4-P6 can identify common 2D shapes but are less confident with 3D shapes, apart from cubes. They have learned in class about concepts such as perimeter, area and volume but are less confident when asked to apply these concepts to practical situations.

### **Information handling**

- Children in P1-P3 are working well with sequencing numbers and can sometimes explain their thinking when they are solving mathematical problems. Children in P4-P6 are able to

confidently identify the best method to gather data, analyse it and display it, for example using a tally table which is then converted into a bar chart or a pie chart.

### **Attainment over time in Literacy and Numeracy**

- Any improvement in attainment over time is difficult to assess due to the small cohorts of children in each year group and the large proportion of children with English as an additional language. In general terms, attainment is holding steady but there is no clear pattern of either increase or decrease of attainment over time in either literacy or numeracy.
- The school has been using several forms of standardised assessment. Overall the ePIPS data shows sustained improvement for almost all children in reading and mathematics. INCAS data, collected over the last three years, shows slight improvement in reading and general mathematics, with steady performance in mental mathematics.
- According to teacher judgement, the majority of children are on track with their learning in listening and talking, reading, writing and mathematics. A minority require support in one or more areas and a few require more challenge.
- Angus Council data on 'value added' in authority primary schools shows that, between 2013-2014 and 2015-2016, the school has reversed the literacy deficit to the point where the rate of progress in literacy is now ahead of numeracy.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- The acting headteacher has collated an overall picture of achievement for the whole school, which consists of 36 learners over 2 classes from P1 to P6.
- There is a display in the school hall which shows examples of children's achievements, including those from outside school.
- Classroom displays also show children's 'wider' achievements, linking these to the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. Cards are sent home to acknowledge this. Achievements are also acknowledged in children's Home School Link books.
- The headteacher celebrates children's achievement at regular assemblies. Attendance at school clubs is also being monitored. Further work is now planned to track the achievement of children in the school.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The school has information about the SIMD background of each child and their attainment. There is no clear link between SIMD and overall levels of attainment and there is no obvious poverty-related attainment gap.
- 56% of children who attend the school have English as an additional language. There are no looked after children and only a few children have identified additional support needs.
- The school received £6000 as part of the Pupil Equity Fund. Staff, children and parents were consulted about how this would best be spent.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

good

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*

#### **PSNC**

- There is an appropriate focus on health and wellbeing within the setting which has a positive impact on children's learning and development. As a result, children are making good progress in this area. The majority are able to communicate their needs and feelings, according to their stage of development. They use the 'happy board' to make suggestions about how to make the setting a safe and happy place to be. Children could now take on additional roles of responsibility within the setting to develop their leaderships skills.
- The majority of children show a good understanding of how to help keep themselves healthy. They are familiar with and understand the importance of routines such as hand washing, tooth brushing and using sunscreen. They demonstrate good physical skills when playing outdoors with active play equipment and taking part in physical education sessions. Children are developing resilience through perseverance in tasks and working together.
- The majority of children are making good progress in communication and early language. They happily engage in conversation, sharing their thoughts and ideas, for example when describing the features of their artwork. They are increasingly able to make their needs known and to negotiate friendships through play. The majority of children demonstrate a good use of vocabulary and are keen to learn new words. They independently access books and the majority can recall the narrative of familiar stories, asking questions to help clarify their thinking.
- Children are enthusiastic about their learning and sharing their work with others. The minority show an interest in mark-making and early writing. Children would now benefit from additional real life and imaginary contexts in which to apply their developing mark-making skills.
- The majority of children are making good progress in mathematics and numeracy. They count with confidence and show good number recognition skills. The majority of children are beginning to work with numbers beyond ten and can choose strategies to help them solve problems. Children are developing an understanding of shape and mathematical concepts which they apply during art and junk modelling activities.

- Children confidently use comparative language when playing at the water tray and show a developing understanding of weight and volume. They use measuring equipment to track the growth of their sunflower plants and each other's' height. Children are also developing their information handling skills as they record these processes and experiment with different ways to represent information.
- Children benefit from weekly French lessons and are developing their use of common words and phrases in a way that is active, motivating and enjoyable. The minority of children demonstrate good recall of prior learning and confidence in learning new words.
- Children show a high level of interest in the natural world. They enthusiastically record the progress of caterpillars, observing the lifecycle of the butterfly. Children show an interest in finding out about the insects that can be found in the garden and use equipment such as magnifying glasses and cameras to extend their interest. They use the internet to research and find out the answers to their questions.
- Children's achievements are recognised through effective use of praise and good communication with families. Wider achievements are captured through learning folders which add to an overall picture of children's progress over time. Practitioners have now established that they would like to develop their approaches to recognising children's achievements within the setting.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of the individual circumstances of children and families as well as factors which may influence a child's participation in learning. They use this information to promote inclusion and equity and to identify strategies to support continuous improvement and progress for all children.

## School choice of QI: 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Impact on learners' successes and achievements

### PSNC

- Self-evaluation is carried out on a mostly informal basis within the setting. Practitioners reflect on their day to day practice and the experiences of children. The team have used national practice documents in previous years to support their reflection and have begun to explore more recent guidance to help them identify the direction of improvement. They have established that they need to work more closely with these documents to support their self-evaluation and to assess their own practice and provision. This will in turn enable self-evaluation to feed more effectively into the improvement plans for the setting.
- The views of parents and families are highly valued within the setting. Daily conversations with parents allow practitioners to gather their feedback about various aspects of the setting and use this to influence improvement. More formal methods such as questionnaires also give the team a reflection of the views of children and families. As planned, practitioners should explore a range of consultation methods in order to make this process as convenient and meaningful as possible. Children are regularly consulted throughout their time at setting and their views used to develop the environment and planned learning experiences.
- The focus of the setting's improvement plan is improving outcomes for children and providing a high quality experience of learning through play. Practitioners should now continue to develop the link between self-evaluation and improved approaches to how young children learn within the setting. Progress and achievements should be shared and celebrated with all stakeholders.

### Primary

- Teachers regularly discuss and review their work with each other. They realise that they now need to moderate their work more frequently and more formally. Discussions now take place between the nursery class practitioner and the P1-P3 teacher, as well as between the P1-P3 teacher and the P3-6 teacher. Discussions are also taking place with teachers from other schools to explore and agree assessment standards.
- Teachers now regularly review their work, and the progress of children, with the headteacher. A future focus for teachers' assessment will be the National Benchmarks.
- The school regularly consults parents to gauge their opinions on a range of issues, which recently included the use of the Pupil Equity Fund allocation.
- The school should ensure that community partners become more involved in self-evaluation activities in the school which can lead to improved outcomes for children.
- Teachers and the headteacher recently evaluated years one and two of the school's three-year plan together. The progress of the plan has informed the training which staff undertake during the year.

- Previous work was done where staff evaluated their work using quality indicators. The school understands that it would be helpful if this approach was reintroduced.
- The school is at the early stages of organising attainment and achievement data strategically. This approach has the potential to help practitioners improve outcomes for learners across the school.
- Teachers have recently evaluated the impact of training courses which they attended during the current session. They are also in the early stages of evaluating the impact of a recently introduced literacy approach. The school should now ensure that self-evaluation leads to improved outcomes for children in the school.

## **Particular strengths of the school**

- Strong and effective leadership of the school.
- Inclusive staff, working with a range of ages and home languages.
- Friendly, enthusiastic and motivated children across the nursery class and the school.
- Motivating learning experiences in primary classes.

## **Agreed areas for improvement for the school**

- More effective self-evaluation approaches leading to improved outcomes in the nursery class and school.
- More strategic use of data in the primary school to track and demonstrate improvements for learners.
- Better use of the unique context of the school to raise attainment.

## **What happens at the end of the inspection?**

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Angus Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

## **Education Scotland**

Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston EH54 6GA

**T** +44 (0)131 244 4330  
**E** enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

[www.education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)

© Crown Copyright, 2017

You may re-use this information (excluding images and logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence providing that it is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Education Scotland copyright and the document title specified.

To view this licence, visit <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.