

Summarised inspection findings

Tynewater Primary School Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

31 March 2026

HM Inspectors gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the ELC's work using three quality indicators from the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors. This document provides our summarised findings.

Key contextual information

Tynewater Nursery is a class within Tynewater Primary School. It is located in the accessible rural village of Pathhead in Midlothian. The nursery comprises of a large indoor space, a smaller playroom and a kitchen. There is a secure outdoor learning space which borders farmland. Nursery children have their own entry and exit. Children have access to learning spaces within the school. They eat all meals within the playroom.

The nursery is registered for 32 children from the age of three to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection there were 15 children on the roll. The nursery is open Monday to Thursday from 8.40 am until 3.15 pm and Friday from 8.20 am until 12.20 pm. The acting headteacher has overall leadership and management responsibility for the nursery. A senior early years practitioner leads the day-to-day work of the nursery. She is supported by four early years practitioners over the course of the week.

Staff have experienced interrupted leadership in the recent past. The acting headteacher took up post in June 2025 and is providing valuable leadership to the early years team.

Curriculum	satisfactory
This quality indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs, interests, rights and progress of children at the centre of curriculum design and implementation. <u>Curriculum</u> is defined as the totality of all that is planned for children from ELC, through school and beyond. It emphasises that children are entitled to a curriculum underpinned by the <u>principles of curriculum design</u> and enriched through meaningful learning experiences indoors, outdoors and within the community. It recognises the need for all children to experience opportunities to develop the interests, knowledge, skills, and attributes they will need to adapt, thrive and achieve in today’s world. This quality indicator also recognises the importance of the curriculum supporting progress in children’s learning as they enter the setting and at key points of transition. The themes are: • curriculum rationale and design • continuity and progression in the curriculum • partnerships • skills for life and learning	

■ The current curriculum rationale outlines what makes the whole school unique and the vision values and aims which underpin the work of all who are part of the school community. Staff provide a curriculum which is firmly based on play. They increasingly take account of children’s interests and their lives outside the nursery in meaningful ways. Staff offer a curriculum which respects children’s rights, is nurturing and prioritises children’s wellbeing. Moving forward, staff need to revisit the key principles of curriculum design to help them shape a curriculum which enables all children to make the best possible progress.

- Children benefit from learning in an extensive outdoor space where they have the freedom to run, climb and explore. This is an embedded element of children's everyday experience at nursery. Indoors, children make independent choices based on their interests. Staff now need to provide planned learning opportunities which offer greater depth and challenge to ensure children progress their knowledge and skills. Staff use the wider outdoor environment to engage children in learning about their natural environment and community. Children walk to the woods regularly and use local amenities to enrich their learning. Staff now need to consider how they ensure children make progress over time through engaging in these experiences including learning for sustainability.
- Staff nurture close relationships with their families. They are open, welcoming and listen carefully to the views of families. Staff encourage families to respond online to the observations they post of children's learning and interests. Staff introduced opportunities for families to share their child's achievements from home and celebrate these at nursery. They are beginning to take account of these wider achievements as they plan learning opportunities to build on children's skills.
- Staff have begun to keep a closer check on the extent to which children receive their entitlement to learning across all curricular areas. They are now identifying aspects of the curriculum that they need to plan more systematically. This will help ensure all children receive a broad curriculum at the right level of challenge. Working with the acting headteacher, staff need to develop further their approaches to making sure all children make progress continuously. This should include building on children's prior learning during their time in nursery.
- Staff liaise closely with their colleagues in the school to organise well-planned and supportive transition experiences. Children make smooth transitions into P1. Staff collaborate regularly to improve further continuity and progression across the early level. Children are beginning to take part in wider school activities. There is scope for nursery children to learn alongside older children more often to develop their confidence and skills. Staff work closely with families when children start nursery for the first time or move from another nursery. They put in place individualised arrangements which promote positive wellbeing as children settle into their new environment.
- Staff provide regular opportunities for families to engage in their child's learning through 'stay and play' sessions and through sharing their expertise. They should now build on this and collaborate with families to help them develop the curriculum further. It would be beneficial for staff to develop wider local partnerships which broaden children's learning experiences and enable them to learn new skills.
- Staff provide learning experiences which encourage children's interest and excitement. Children like to share their views and express their knowledge. They value staff's attentiveness when they engage in extended conversation with children about their ideas and preferences. Children use digital devices for specific purposes and work alongside staff to learn the skills they need to use digital learning meaningfully. There is scope for staff to continue to develop the contexts for digital learning and as tools for progression in other curricular areas. Staff are at the early stages of supporting children to develop their skills for learning, life and work.

Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
This quality indicator focuses on how children benefit from access to high quality spaces and well-established routines that help them feel secure and ready to engage. It explores how children are supported to build positive relationships, regulate their emotions, and purposefully participate in a wide range of motivating learning experiences. It demonstrates the importance of staff having a high level of skill supported by strong pedagogical leadership. This includes a clear understanding of pedagogy, the concept of play, how children learn, children's rights and children's behaviour. It places value on high quality relationships, consistent expectations, and skilled interactions that enable children to sustain engagement, follow routines, and build independence in their learning. This indicator highlights the importance of observing and interacting sensitively with children to plan and assess their learning. It recognises the value of involving children fully in planning their learning indoors, outdoors and within the local community. This quality indicator emphasises the importance of robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress to ensure practitioners know all children very well as learners. The themes are: • children's learning and engagement • interactions to support learning • planning and assessment • tracking and monitoring	

- Staffs' promotion of positive relationships is a strength across the nursery class. They are developing strong, trusting relationships with children and their families. This supports almost all children to settle well. Staff engage respectfully with each other which results in children who are kind and respectful in their interactions.
- Almost all children engage well with the range of play spaces and activities available to them. These provide opportunities for children to investigate and build relevant skills. For example, children learn about freezing, thawing and how to cut vegetables safely. Staff should now use their knowledge of individual children's interests to provide more open-ended experiences indoors, outdoors and in the wider community. This will help deepen and personalise children's learning through play.
- Children benefit from a large space outdoors where they can run, explore in their mud kitchen and cycle. Indoors, staff should look to offer a broader range of experiences, including loose parts and creative materials. In doing so they should deliver a rich variety of challenging experiences across all curricular areas. This should ensure children have greater opportunities for breadth, challenge, and depth in their learning.
- Staff value their recent professional learning on interactions provided by the acting headteacher who guides them very effectively. This is enabling them to find out more about what children already know and understand. Staff should continue to refine their techniques as they interact with children to ensure they provide appropriate support and challenge for all children.

- Staff plan for children's learning responsively using floorbooks and area planners. They have recently introduced intentional planning into their floorbooks. In consultation with the acting headteacher, staff have identified planning approaches as a priority for improvement this session. Children would benefit from a greater balance between adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led planning to ensure they are receiving their entitlement to a broad curriculum.
- Staff discuss individual children's development together regularly which helps them to provide engaging experiences which children enjoy. They gather examples of children's experiences in electronic learning journals. These include photographs, comments and observations. To improve the quality of electronic journals, staff should continue to develop their skills in observing and recording children's significant learning. This should help them make increasingly accurate judgements about the progress children are making and to identify more challenging next steps in learning.
- The staff team are at the early stages of tracking children's progress. Senior leaders meet staff regularly to review the progress children are making. Together they monitor and track children's progress in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. Staff need to use this valuable information routinely to plan and assess the outcomes of the learning experiences they provide for individual children. This will support all children to progress in learning at a pace which meets their needs.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	satisfactory
This quality indicator highlights the importance of positive relationships and children’s wellbeing. It recognises the importance of providing high quality, inclusive, and appropriate rights-based support. These approaches result in improved outcomes for children’s learning, wellbeing and participation. It takes full account of children who may require additional support to access and benefit fully from their entitlement to high quality ELC. This includes identifying and assessing their learning and wellbeing needs in a timely manner and providing personalised and targeted support. This quality indicator recognises that strong, collaborative partnership working between those supporting children is essential. It highlights the importance of meaningful engagement with children and families to inform decisions about how children’s needs should be met. This quality indicator emphasises the important role senior leaders play in ensuring all staff have relevant and worthwhile professional learning to meet the diverse and sometimes complex needs of children. The themes are: • positive relationships and wellbeing • universal support • Identifying and assessing learning needs and targeted support • inclusion and equality	

- All staff interact sensitively with children and each other to create a calm, positive environment. This enables almost all children to manage their emotions and cooperate well across the day. Staff encourage all families to ensure their child benefits from attending nursery regularly. Alongside the acting headteacher, they keep a close check on this and respond promptly when children are absent unexpectedly.
- Staff value all children as individuals and their positive relationships with them help children feel safe and respected. They have begun to support children to identify their emotions through the use of wellbeing check-ins and a sign in book. This is helping most children to develop social and emotional regulation well.
- Staff uphold children’s rights and are at the early stages of incorporating these into the routines of the nursery. They should now include children more fully in the decisions that affect them and as active participants in the daily routines. This should enhance children’s sense of belonging and ownership of their nursery.
- Staff support the learning and development needs of children universally through termly target setting shared with families. All children would benefit from staff actively planning for children’s learning and wellbeing more effectively. This will ensure all staff meet children’s needs consistently, reducing barriers to progress and supporting them to achieve their potential. As recognised, staff need continuing support from the acting headteacher. This will help them gain a deeper understanding of and become more confident in using appropriate

inclusive strategies to meet children's varying needs. They need to ensure they use these strategies consistently well throughout the day.

- Staff recognise and understand when children need additional support to play and learn. They collaborate as a team to identify children who would benefit from targeted support. Through the very clear guidance from the acting headteacher, they are beginning to gain confidence in accessing whole school processes for staged intervention. Moving forward, staff should be supported to gain the skills and understanding they need to create, implement and review additional support plans for children who need them. There is scope for staff to make greater use of the national wellbeing indicators to help them build a holistic picture of children's strengths and emerging needs. Families appreciate the attentiveness of staff in recognising when their children may require additional support to enable them to make progress in their learning.
- Staff show dignity and respect for all children and their families. They celebrate differences and plan opportunities for children to learn about unique characteristics, values and cultural celebrations. Staff should ensure that these learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate for all children. Staff acknowledge respectfully the different circumstances in which children live. They are keen to build on the advantages of different cultures and languages that children bring to the nursery. Staff recognise sensitively the socio-economic climate within the village and the challenges families can face.

Safeguarding

- The setting 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.

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.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.