

Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

Moncreiffe Primary School Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

20 January 2026

In November 2025, a team of inspectors from HM inspectors of Education and the Care Inspectorate visited Moncreiffe Primary School Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

Key inspection findings

- Staff in the nursery know children and families very well. There are positive, nurturing relationships between staff and children. This results in children who are happy, confident, enthusiastic and kind to each other as they learn.
- Staff provide a wide range of purposeful and exciting learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. This helps children to develop a variety of skills including communication and language in a fun and imaginative way.
- Staff had high aspirations for the children they cared for and demonstrated a clear understanding of how children develop and learn.
- Leaders provided clear guidance and direction, which fostered trusting and respectful relationships across the setting.
- Families held the staff team and setting in high regard and valued the relationships and attachments their children had formed with staff.
- Staff were highly skilled and knowledgeable and demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

HM Inspectors and the Care Inspectorate gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the setting's work using four quality indicators from [the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors](#).

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	very good
Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
Nurturing, care and support	very good
Children's progress	very good

Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual Information

Moncreiffe Nursery Class is situated in a separate building within the grounds of Moncreiffe Primary School in Perth. There is a large playroom with free-flow access to an outdoor environment. There is also a family room. All children access the school gym and lunch hall. Children access 1140 hours of early learning childcare (ELC) between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm five days a week during term time. The setting is registered for a maximum of 24 children age three to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. There are currently 19 children on the roll.

The headteacher has overall strategic responsibility for the nursery class. There are three early childhood practitioners, and a nursery play assistant. An early years family learning practitioner and nursery support teacher support the setting for one day per week. Children and families with English as an additional language (EAL) are supported by an EAL teacher if required.

Leadership: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff benefitted from a committed and visible leadership and together they demonstrated consistently high aspirations for children and families. Leaders provided clear guidance and direction, which fostered trusting and respectful relationships across the setting. Staff worked effectively together to ensure this positive ethos was embedded in the shared values and culture of the service. This meant children were respected, valued, and felt loved.

Staff were knowledgeable, highly skilled, well trained and understood how children develop and learn. They demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and proudly told us of their responsibilities and leadership roles. Staff expressed pride in their work and valued the contributions of children and families to help improve outcomes.

Almost all staff consistently used effective questioning and skilled interactions to promote and enhance children's care, support, and learning. There was a strong focus on the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) framework and children's rights to play and to be heard. We found this was promoted well through experiences, spaces, and most interactions. This provided children with meaningful and purposeful learning experiences which fully engaged them in their play and learning.

Staff were empowered to celebrate achievements and reflect on their practice through effective supervision meetings with the head teacher. This meant staff felt fully supported by the leadership team, and were confident, enthusiastic, and

committed practitioners. A culture of openness and inclusion was evident. Opportunities for professional discussions, reflection, and collaboration with partners within the local authority had contributed positively to their practice. Staff were receptive to feedback which enabled them to explore areas for improvement as part of their ongoing development. As a result, children and families experienced high-quality experiences and outcomes.

Effective staff deployment meant children were always accounted for, which kept them safe and secure. Staff communicated well, supported each other throughout the day and were flexible. Staff breaks were thoughtfully planned which minimised disruption to children's experiences and routines. During busier times, for example, at lunchtime and home time, appropriate staffing levels were maintained, and key staff were available to support children and families. This meant transitions were smooth and impacted positively on children's wellbeing.

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

Staff have strong relationships and secure attachments with all children, which is a key strength of the setting. As a result, all children feel safe and valued. All children collaborate and engage confidently with one another during play, sharing their learning and helping each other. Staff have created a culture of respect and kindness where almost all children demonstrate kindness to each other very well during play. Staff have created a culture of respect, where most children demonstrate kindness to each other well during play. Staff very effectively plan individual learning targets for each child, display them in the setting, and share them with both the children and their parents. This very effective practice supports children to develop independence and ownership of their learning.

All staff provide a wide range of exciting, purposeful, open-ended learning opportunities across all curriculum areas both indoors and outdoors, sparking children's creativity and curiosity. Staff design these high-quality experiences carefully to be rich in numeracy, literacy, and health and wellbeing across the curriculum. Staff use the local community effectively to provide real-life learning experiences for children. For example, taking children to the local shop to buy a stamp and a card to post to the headteacher. Staff actively use this experience to inspire children to become enthusiastic and motivated learners. Whilst on local walks, children demonstrate a strong understanding of their local community. They develop their mathematical skills by counting and observing as they use tally marks to record what they see.

Staff engage warmly and respectfully with children. They are very positive role models, with a strong focus on achieving the best outcomes for the children in the setting. Secure and friendly relationships help all children become happy, confident, and enthusiastic learners. Almost all staff use highly effective questioning to support

children to extend their learning. Staff understand each child's individual learning styles and plan experiences well to provide both support and challenge for all children. They listen attentively through conversations and document children's views on mind maps and observations.

Staff make highly effective use of digital technology to enrich learning. Children use a wide range of digital technology confidently and independently to extend their learning. For example, children share detailed drawings on the interactive whiteboard and use programmable toys to problem solve.

Staff are highly skilled as they closely observe and gather evidence of children's significant learning to make accurate judgments about their progress. This information includes the child's voice and builds a holistic picture of each child. This is recorded on an online platform. Staff should continue to use the language of skill development more consistently with children and families. This should form a more robust picture of what children are learning.

Staff meet regularly to plan for children's learning. Planning is both responsive and intentional. Staff successfully incorporate the child's voice, the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes, children's rights and developmental milestones. Staff should make more explicit the evaluation of learning experiences and the involvement of children as they plan. This should support children in their understanding of what they have achieved. Staff regularly involve families in learning opportunities through story telling sessions to support literacy development and 'stay and play' with a numeracy theme. As already identified, staff should provide further opportunities for families to be involved more in their child's learning, and plan next steps together. This should ensure parents and staff have a greater shared understanding of children's progress.

Staff are supported to make sound professional judgements on children's progress. Staff use local authority tracking guidance and developmental milestones very effectively to monitor and track children's progress across literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing.

Staff use a wide range of data and robust processes very effectively to identify individual and groups of children who require additional support in their learning. They design the curriculum to provide breadth, depth and challenge. Staff closely monitor children requiring further support and implement a wide range of universal and targeted interventions. For example, a focus on numeracy concepts which has a very positive impact on children's numeracy progression.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Almost all staff were nurturing, friendly and compassionate and sensitively listened to children. Positive body language, tone of voice, and kind facial expressions sent a message to children that their voice mattered. Children were praised and encouraged, offered cuddles and reassurance when needed which fostered a sense of love and nurture. This resulted in children who were happy, settled, confident and having fun at nursery.

Staff knew children very well as detailed personal plans were developed in partnership with families and reflected children as unique individuals. Staff used this information effectively, to meet their needs and enhance their strengths and changing interests. This resulted in children who received care and support which was compassionate, responsive, and right for them.

Children experiencing challenges were supported very well through enhanced and targeted plans that reduced barriers to learning. This meant they were settled, engaged, and fully included in nursery routines and experiences. Staff, including a family learning practitioner, worked meaningfully with external agencies and signposted families to additional services and groups for further support. This provided families with a sense of security, enhanced the quality of care and support, and ensured children's wellbeing was sustained.

Children benefitted from personal care routines that respected their privacy and dignity and mealtimes that were unhurried and sociable. Staff used these experiences to engage children in rich conversations, which helped develop their independence, and social skills. Families were warmly welcomed into the service and spoke highly of the staff team. They clearly valued the strong, collaborative relationships and secure attachments their children had formed with staff. Families told us, 'Our children are cared for with love and attention' and 'Our child feels loved by the staff, I cannot fault them.' We found the consistent staff team within the nursery resulted in high-quality care and support for all.

Transitions were managed thoughtfully, guided by children and families. The move between home and nursery was calm and nurturing, which helped children settle quickly into their routines. School children were welcomed into the nursery after lunch to read stories and play games with their younger peers. This provided nursery children with a sense of safety and security and supported their transition into primary one very well.

Staff understood their role in keeping children safe. They were confident in child protection and safeguarding procedures. Medication systems ensured medication was stored and administered safely. Accidents and incidents were appropriately recorded and monthly audits identified and minimised risk. Staff and children had embraced our 'Keeping children safe - look, think, act campaign' (SIMOA). Children

took SIMOA, the toy elephant, home for the weekend and shared their learning with families. One child excitedly told us, 'SIMOA likes to come to my house, he keeps us safe there too, we have fun at my house.' As a result, children developed an awareness of keeping themselves and others safe.

Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Children make very good progress across almost all aspects of their learning. Children benefit from high-quality, attractive spaces and a wide range of motivating early learning experiences. Staff promote the use of visuals, signing and consistent routines that support all children to make progress in their own way. Children are confident, independent learners who develop a wide variety of skills through real-life contexts for a sustained period of time.

Staff place a strong focus on health and wellbeing across all aspects of the setting. Children regularly access the gym hall and participate in a physical activity programme. Staff plan activities carefully to support children develop gross motor skills in a fun and imaginative way. Children participate in a cycle proficiency programme which has empowered children to share their cycling success at home. Staff support children to complete an emotional check in as they arrive at the setting. Children are able to talk confidently about their feelings. Children learn well together with their friends. They demonstrate very good collaboration as they build dens, plant and dig for dinosaurs. During outdoor play, all children are independent as they organise themselves using equipment safely and as they risk assess the outdoor space.

Children develop their early language and literacy very well through focus stories to extend knowledge and their increase vocabulary. They use these experiences to create their own stories, with a few children writing words and talking about the author and illustrator of the story. Staff very effectively extend children's learning, use provocations and encourage imagination and creativity. For example, the creation of a puppet show by the children for their friends.

Staff embed early numeracy and mathematical opportunities across the curriculum. Children access a wide range of high-quality, purposeful learning experiences provided by knowledgeable staff to support their numeracy progression. Most children can count to 10 and beyond. They are skilled in the use of the language of numeracy throughout their play. For example, measuring each other's heights and comparing size using cubes and measuring tapes.

Staff are highly skilled in their knowledge of children's significant learning and progress over time. They use a wide range of well-planned universal and targeted approaches. For example, the use of strategies with children to support their speech

and language development. Staff collaborate very closely with parents and other agencies to share information about children's progress.

Staff recognise, value and celebrate children's individual achievements both within and beyond the setting. They display achievements from home on the 'achievement tree.' Staff celebrate achievement through sharing children's success daily and through informal chats with parents. Staff use praise meaningfully and encourage all children to succeed. This positive approach from staff empowers children to recognise their own potential and make progress. Staff should continue to encourage families to share achievements from out with the setting to build on prior learning, inform planning and support children to make progress.

Children actively contribute to the development of the setting, for example by helping to develop the garden space. These exciting and purposeful spaces are carefully designed to engage children in real-life experiences and provide high quality learning. Staff have rightly identified the importance of the child's voice and participation beyond the setting. Children benefit from being involved in leadership roles within the nursery.

Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic context in which children and families live. Staff gather a wide range of data and use this skilfully to identify children who require additional targeted support. They plan and evaluate this support carefully and sensitively with families to ensure improved outcomes and progress for children.

Safeguarding(HMIE)

Inspectors discussed safeguarding and child protection information provided by the ELC setting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the ELC setting and the education authority.

Outcome of inspection

We are confident that the ELC setting has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

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