

Summarised inspection findings

Ferryhill Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

2 December 2025

Education Scotland ELC inspections (pilot phase)

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](#). As this inspection is part of Education Scotland's inspection pilot phase using the Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors, these quality indicators have not been graded. This document provides our summarised findings.

Key contextual information

Ferryhill Nursery Class is situated in a residential area of the City of Edinburgh. The nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to offer a maximum of 78 early learning and childcare places at any one time. Children attend nursery from the age of two until they begin primary school. There are 47 children on the roll. Two playrooms connect to a large outdoor area. The smaller playroom is the base for children aged under three. There is a large team of early learning and childcare officers, practitioners, early years assistants and domestic staff. The highly visible, experienced deputy headteacher has responsibility for the leadership of the nursery, alongside other responsibilities throughout the school. Last session there were changes in staffing within the nursery due to staff leaving to secure promoted posts or maternity leave cover. Less than half of children currently in the setting started in August 2025. A few children were settling into their nursery experience for the first time.

Curriculum

This quality indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs, interests, rights and progress of children at the centre of curriculum design and implementation. [Curriculum](#) 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 [principles of curriculum design](#) 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 curriculum for children aged 3-5 is firmly based on play and learning and takes account of curriculum for excellence and national practice guidance. All planning is flexible and responsive to children's interests. This enables staff to provide enjoyable and relevant learning experiences. Staff thoughtfully use tracking data and evidence-based approaches to support a range of identified learning needs effectively. They should continue to develop rich learning experiences to ensure depth and challenge in learning across curricular areas.
- Staff across the setting understand the context of the community very well. They take account of the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of families, as they develop the curriculum. The team recognise there is more opportunity to incorporate ideas from families into the curriculum. This will help them to build consistently on what children already know and enable children to experience greater continuity and progression in their learning.
- Children and families experience well planned and supportive transitions into the setting and through into primary school. Staff work with parents to understand children's needs and preferences as they come to the setting for the first time. Staff encourage families of children attending the 'Terrific Twos' to stay and join in 'settling in visits' before children start nursery. This helps staff to know families well. Children attending the 'Terrific Twos' room share the

outdoor space with the 3–5-year-olds and movement between rooms is very fluid. As a result, all staff know all children well. Staff meet with primary one teachers to share relevant information as children move on to school. This ensures continuity in strategies to support learning.

- The team enhance children's learning experiences through using spaces within the school environment such as the school playground, gym hall and library. They recognise there are spaces within the local community that could provide additional learning experiences for children. Staff should now begin to develop meaningful relationships with carefully chosen community partners, that will help to enrich and extend children's learning.
- Staff provide opportunities for parental engagement and family learning. Family attendance at these events is limited, however the feedback from those attending sessions is positive. The team are exploring ways they can share the benefits that families experienced, to increase participation. As planned, they should continue to support parents to understand the significant role they play and seek ways to empower them to contribute to the curriculum.
- Children are developing skills for life through helping to prepare foods for snack, planting and growing plants and vegetables in the nursery garden. Staff support children to develop skills and confidence that help them to contribute to improvements within the setting. Children's ideas have helped to develop the lunch time experience and children have suggested ideas for improving family learning experiences. The team are beginning to help children to learn about the importance of looking after the world in which they live. Staff recognise the need to develop children's digital literacy in meaningful ways.

Learning, teaching and assessment

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 social and emotional and communication
- planning and assessment
- tracking and monitoring

- Staff provide a warm and welcoming ethos for children and families. All staff are kind and caring and have established strong, loving and nurturing relationships with the children. Staff provide a welcome group time for children each day. They welcome children individually, share the timetable and routines for the day and revisit and reinforce the nursery values. This is supporting most children to feel confident and safe in the setting and to be kind and respectful to others. The team sensitively support children to manage their emotions and quickly help children to resolve any disagreements. As a result, almost all children are happy and settled. They play well together, with or alongside other children.
- The environments, both indoors and outdoors, contain a good range of engaging play experiences. These promote curiosity and allow children to explore and experiment. In addition, the large outdoor learning environment provides a range of stimulating and challenging experiences. Children develop their physical skills well and enjoy learning about the natural world. Most children eagerly choose where they want to play and sustain interest in their chosen activities.
- All staff engage sensitively with children in their play. They have all undertaken training to support children's communication and language and are embedding approaches to ensure they consistently engage in effective interactions. They ensure they provide face to face interactions and listen attentively to what children have to say and communicate. Most staff engage in high-quality interactions using commentary and repetition to support language development. They use songs very well to support children's understanding of routines and expectations. A few staff members used effective open-ended questions to extend children's thinking and learning. Children use tablet devices to take photographs and to revisit previous learning. Staff should continue to provide creative experiences to develop further children's digital skills.

- Staff plan learning using a blend of responsive and intentional planning. They take account of children's interests, seasonal changes and cultural events to plan relevant and engaging learning experiences. The team should continue to develop planning and the use of floorbooks to involve children more fully in the planning process. This should support them to build effectively on what children already know and what they would like to learn next. This should help children to have a better understanding of their own learning and help to ensure appropriate pace and challenge in learning for all.
- All children have a current online learning journal folder. The learning journals contain photographs, film clips and observations about children's learning. Staff identify and record skills children are developing as they engage in nursery activities. Parents can access children's learning journals easily and this helps to keep them informed about their children's learning. The team now need to ensure observations consistently capture children's significant learning across the curriculum. Staff use developmental milestones to track children's learning and to plan appropriate next steps in learning. Staff gather information, which helps to demonstrate children's progress over time and identifies where further support is required.
- The team are using evidence-based intervention strategies to provide effective support. Staff meet termly with senior management to discuss in detail the tracking information for their key group of children. This supports moderation across the setting and helps to ensure sound judgements about children's progress.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality

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

- The senior leadership team and all staff have a well-informed professional understanding of the crucial importance of children's wellbeing. Staff practice is underpinned well by learning about highly relevant topics. For example, trauma informed practice and the 'Getting it right for every child' approach. The team are patient, attentive and responsive as they get to know, anticipate and take effective account of what children need daily. Staff adapt and differentiate their support very well to enable most children to begin to understand and express their emotions.
- The team plan a wide range of appropriate small group activities and daily routines to ensure all children spend time with a familiar, trusted adult. All children feel increasingly secure in nursery through the strong bonds they have developed with staff. This emphasis on relationships supports children to begin to learn how to regulate their emotions, share resources and begin to share spaces with others.
- Children are active and develop a positive sense of self and a strong sense of belonging as they play games, dance and sing. They begin to develop their awareness of their body in relaxing yoga sessions. The team's focused work on healthy eating supports most children to begin to eat a wider range of healthy food. Most staff use and reinforce the language of values well as they praise children who are kind or safe as they play. The team should now implement their plans to improve children's understanding of their own and other children's rights.
- Staff quickly build trusting, respectful and supportive relationships with all parents. Positive partnerships between staff and children's families enable the team to understand and value children's individual needs well. Senior leaders share information effectively to ensure all team members understand and take good account of the wellbeing, needs and views of parents as well as children. The team use their detailed knowledge about children's needs and personalities to assess and shape the individual support they provide for each family. For a few

parents this includes translating what children have had for lunch or linking with other agencies to provide additional practical support. Parents and staff work well together to complete and revisit up to date records about children's development. Staff document and implement clear plans to inform experiences, interactions and spaces to support children to learn.

- A helpful range of universal, small group and direct one-to-one interactions, support children who have specific identified learning needs well. A few parents enjoy taking part in hands on, enjoyable experiences and groups where they learn together with their child. The team should continue to work with parents to promote, increase and celebrate the impact of parents' involvement. Senior leaders should continue to work with staff and parents to identify and celebrate the impact of children's improved attendance on children's learning and development.
- Children are proud of their diverse family backgrounds, home language and cultural background. The team have an inclusive and consistently respectful approach. Staff highly value the diversity of all families and within their team and take time to explore and understand the changing needs of families and the local community. Practical support for parents includes a 'sharing table' to provide access to groceries or books. The senior leadership team pay additional attention to the progress of children who are, for example care experienced or face additional challenges or barriers. All staff should continue to work with partners and parents to evaluate strategies to improve outcomes for children who experience the impact of poverty.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority.

Other relevant evidence

- The setting operates from purpose-built premises in the grounds of the school. This was beneficial 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