

**HMIE**

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdadh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

Summarised inspection findings

The Pumpkin Patch Nursery (Scotland) Ltd

East Lothian Council

30 June 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

The Pumpkin Patch Nursery (Scotland) Ltd is a privately owned setting located in North Berwick, East Lothian. The setting is in partnership with East Lothian Council to provide funded early learning and childcare to children aged from two years to those not yet attending school. The setting is registered for 60 children at any given time. There are currently 90 children on the roll, aged from six weeks to those not yet attending school. Children attend on a variety of attendance patterns from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery includes three playrooms and an outdoor space. The staff consists of a manager, a depute manager, eight early years practitioners and five early years practitioner apprentices.

Curriculum	satisfactory
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• curriculum rationale and design• continuity and progression in the curriculum• partnerships• skills for life and learning	

- Children experience a curriculum that is based on child-centred learning. Staff communicate well with parents, children and one another to respond quickly to what motivates and engages individual children. The team ensure that children have frequent opportunities to be active as they are supported to access energetic play outdoors. Children regularly access their vibrant local community, often on multiple occasions in the same day. Staff facilitate regular opportunities for children to explore the beach, shops and community spaces. Importantly, the manager has arranged access to relevant professional learning to deepen the team's understanding of how to design and plan their curriculum. Senior leaders work in partnership with external agencies to increase the team's focus on learning for sustainability. Staff plans for this work are at an early stage of implementation. The team should now involve children, staff, parents and partners to design and use a curriculum rationale to inform learning. Staff should pay careful attention to the design principles of depth and challenge across all aspects of their work.
- Staff are at the early stages of developing a clear shared approach to curriculum design. The team work with children and parents effectively to respond to children's interests. Together, they provide a curriculum that includes a wide range of relevant, enjoyable experiences. Senior

leaders work with visiting specialists to provide weekly learning opportunities in, for example, French. Staff work in positive partnerships with parents, partners and children to create personalised transition opportunities. The team communicate well with one another to ensure children move rooms at the right time for each child depending on their stage of development. Staff now need to deepen their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence and the curriculum offer to ensure spaces, experiences and interactions build more effectively on children's prior learning and skills. Staff do not yet provide progressive experiences across all areas of children's learning. Staff would benefit from professional learning and support to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in planning and evaluating progression across all areas of the curriculum.

- Children are active, visible learners in their local community. Staff and children know the local area very well and enjoy learning throughout their local area. The team seek out opportunities to involve children in engaging events such as community scavenger hunts and local festivals. Staff initiate and sustain partnerships with a few local businesses and other early learning settings. As a result, children have opportunities to make connections between learning in their nursery and other contexts. Senior leaders and all staff value and act upon parents' views. Parents report that communication from staff supports them well to share their views. Families feel valued, respected and included in the nursery. Senior leaders should now work with parents to agree how to provide increased information about children's progress as learners. A few parents would appreciate more accessible information about the team's plans for children's learning.
- The team have made a positive start to providing increased opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the natural world. Staff plan and carry out visits to the local Sea Bird centre. Children benefit from opportunities to plant seeds, take time to notice and discuss insects as they create 'bug hotels'. Staff should now seek out opportunities to deepen children's skills and knowledge of how to care for and learn more about the natural world.

Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's learning and engagement • interactions to support learning • planning and assessment • tracking and monitoring 	

Children under 3 years of age

- Children under three enjoy nurturing, caring and responsive relationships with staff. They are happy, settled and secure with their key workers. Staff provide engaging sensory experiences for children to explore and investigate. Children follow familiar routines indoors and outdoors. They have good opportunities to develop physical skills by climbing and exploring different surfaces inside and outside.

Children over 3 years of age

- Staff have developed trusting and caring relationships with children and their families. This is a strength of the setting. They take time to welcome children warmly and communicate with parents about the day ahead. Staff create a positive, nurturing ethos across the different playrooms. This has resulted in a calm and relaxed environment where children feel safe and secure.
- Staff have worked together to review environments and made changes in the playrooms to make best use of the space available. This is working well, as staff work around practical challenges of managing free flow play. Playrooms are well resourced. Children make decisions about where they want to play and have the opportunity to explore independently the variety of resources on offer. This supports children to interact positively with each other through their play. Staff should now use their knowledge of individual children's interests to provide more open-ended questioning to extend children's learning experiences indoors, outdoors and in the wider community. In doing so, staff should now support children to develop their independence and leadership skills further.

- Staff make effective and regular use of the local area to enrich children's experiences and develop a range of skills. Children benefit from learning experiences in the natural surroundings of the beach and local park. Staff actively build links within the community to extend learning experiences for the children, for example, developing literacy skills through reading sessions at the local library.
- Staff interact respectfully as they listen to children and value their ideas and interests. They talk with children during their play and, at times, participate in the play. Staff interactions are not yet consistently of high-quality and do not sufficiently focus on supporting and extending children's learning. Staff should continue to refine their techniques as they interact with children. In doing so, they should ensure their interactions with children extend learning and provide more challenge to meet better individual children's needs.
- Children use digital technologies with increasing independence and confidence. They take photographs of their learning and practise literacy and numeracy skills. Staff rightly recognise the need to extend opportunities for children to use digital technologies more regularly in play and learning.
- Staff follow children's interests and use floorbooks to capture their engagement in experiences. They have recently revised their approaches to planning using CfE experiences and outcomes and national practice guidance. Staff are responsive to children's interests in the moment as they play. They follow children's needs and interests as they arise. Staff share intentional planning with parents who are invited to share suggestions and ideas. As planning evolves, staff should consider the balance of intentional and responsive planning to ensure children make the best progress in learning.
- Staff observe children at play and record findings in children's online journals. Staff monitor children's individual progress regularly with managers to evaluate progress and identify achievements and next steps. Staff are not yet capturing a clear picture of children's progress over time or how the learning experiences they provide build on children's prior learning. As planned, staff will shortly start to use the local authority tracker. This will be individualised for each child to demonstrate children's progress over time. Staff should use this information to build more effectively on what children already know. This should help them to provide more effective support for individual children to develop their skills progressively.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	good
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive relationships and wellbeing • universal support • Identifying and assessing learning needs and targeted support • inclusion and equality 	

- Staff build positive and nurturing relationships with all children. This supports children to settle quickly and be happy and confident in the setting. Staff recognise the importance of relationships and are positive role models for children. Children are respectful of each other and when minor conflicts arise, staff support each child sensitively. Most children demonstrate care and kindness for each other and take turns and share resources. Children learn about their emotions and can describe, for example, feeling happy, afraid and sad. Staff support them to manage their own emotions with sensitivity.
- Children are beginning to develop their understanding of the wellbeing indicators in age-appropriate ways. They talk about how to be safe, healthy and when playing indoors and outside. Most children assess risk appropriately as they run, climb and balance safely outdoors. Children understand the importance of making healthy choices at snack time. Staff support children to engage in relaxed snack and lunch experience, giving children a choice of when they eat. Children develop their social skills well during these times as they chat with staff and peers.
- Staff know all children well and use a range of sources to gather information on children's learning and wellbeing needs. This helps them identify strategies that they may use to support children. Staff record these strategies in children's care plans. Staff provide children with appropriate support and encouragement to ensure everyone is included. They use spaces well to ensure most children participate and engage fully in their play and learning. Staff work together with parents and partners to ensure transitions are planned very carefully and are responsive to the needs of children. They are beginning to raise children's awareness of their

rights. Staff should continue to develop children's understanding of rights in a meaningful and purposeful way.

- Staff adhere to legislative requirements and regularly refresh their knowledge and skills to support children. They have appropriate systems and procedures in place to ensure children are safe and well. Staff have effective processes in place to monitor children's attendance. This includes the steps taken by staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children who have not attended the setting as planned. Staff support families sensitively to encourage all children to attend regularly.
- Staff have successfully created an inclusive ethos, which ensures that all children and their families are treated fairly, equally and with respect. They plan opportunities for children to celebrate and take part in various cultural celebrations across the year. Children enjoy these opportunities. Staff should continue to support children to learn about the importance of equality and diversity through planned, meaningful and relevant learning opportunities.

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 HMIE 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.