

Summarised inspection findings

Dunbarney Primary School Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

28 April 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

Dunbarney Primary School Nursery Class sits within the grounds of Dunbarney Primary School and provides early learning and childcare (ELC) within the town of Bridge of Earn. It caters for children aged three to those not yet attending school. It is registered for 32 children at any one time. There are currently 18 children on the roll. The nursery is a term-time provision, and children attend between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The headteacher of the school has overall responsibility for the nursery. She is supported by a full-time deputy headteacher. Further staffing includes two early childhood practitioners, one part-time play assistant and a part-time family learning practitioner. A peripatetic support teacher attends the setting one day per week.

The nursery consists of one playroom with direct access to an outdoor area. Children make use of part of the playroom for lunches.

Curriculum	good
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	

- Staff provide a curriculum that is centred around play and wellbeing and is focused on the nursery values of honesty, ambition, respect and kindness. They ensure that children's needs and interests are the starting point for curriculum delivery which supports most children to lead their learning. All staff have an understanding of the rights of the child and use this in a developmentally appropriate way as they interact with children. Staff listen to children and show genuine interest in their ideas. This is leading to children who are confident and communicate well with their peers and familiar adults.
- Staff make effective use of national and local guidance to inform and develop the curriculum they provide. All staff confidently talk about their curriculum and the rationale behind this. They have a clear understanding of their curricular strengths and the areas to be developed further to ensure a broad curriculum. Recently, staff have developed their knowledge and

understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through learning events. As a result, they are beginning to increase the range and quality of experience on offer to children in these areas. For example, children have been learning to use a range of tools safely. Staff should now develop the curriculum rationale more fully continuing to involve children, families and partners.

- All children have access to a range of rich experiences indoors, outdoors and within the local community. In the outdoor space children explore, investigate and problem solve together using an increasingly broad range of open-ended resources. They take part in a daily run around the trim trail which supports their developing understanding of the importance of being active. All children visit their local community through visits to the local park and shop. They develop their understanding of their wider sense of place through visits to nearby towns, for example, to visit the library. Staff should now consider how they could make these motivating visits more regular for all children.
- Staff effectively record the balance and coverage of learning across the curriculum to ensure any gaps can be identified and planned for. As planned, staff should now increase opportunities for children to be involved in learning through science and technologies. Children's use a small range of digital technologies including programmable toys and interactive screens. Staff, supported by senior leaders, should move forward at pace with their plans to introduce a wider range of digital technologies to enrich the curriculum.
- Staff ensure opportunities for families to share in their child's learning. They welcome families into the setting daily, plan focused 'stay and play' sessions and provide informative curricular events. For example, staff provided a recent phonological awareness session in response to parental requests. Staff ensure families have ongoing access to their child's learning through the use of an online tool. This supports families well to be involved in their child's learning journey and continue this at home.
- Staff have developed relationships with children from two further early learning and childcare settings within the community. This successfully supports transitions. Children who attend more than one setting are supported very well to ensure they experience continuity in their learning across the week. The early years support teacher works effectively across two of these settings and supports this partnership working. Children benefit from building relationships with their 'community friends' which positively supports transition into primary one.

Learning, teaching and assessment	good
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	

- All staff consistently demonstrate warm and nurturing relationships towards children. This helps all children feel valued and understood. As a result, most children confidently explore their play areas with enthusiasm. Most children interact positively, sharing resources and spaces in a way that is well-matched to their developmental stage. Staff should further consider the purpose of how play areas are used by children to increase opportunities for independence. This should support children to deepen and extend their learning.
- Staff ensure clear and consistent routines are well embedded across the setting. As a result, all children are calm and settled during times of transition, throughout the day. For example, children are confident when they prepare for snack by independently washing their hands and collecting their cutlery. Staff provide opportunities for community engagement through visits to the local area, for example, to the library and park. Children's understanding of being healthy and how to stay safe is further developed by these visits. For example, children use a safety character to help them to develop their understanding of staying safe and the steps they can take to keep safe when out in the community such as what they need to do to cross the road safely.
- Staff interactions are warm and caring and individual children are well supported. Most children confidently lead their own learning throughout their session. All staff sensitively join in with play to provide timely support and most interactions extend thinking and develop curiosity. All staff are committed to children's rights. They have developed an ethos which supports children to have a voice. For example, children are involved in resourcing their play areas and their voice is clearly recorded within the responsive planning system. Staff skilfully support children to promote sustained engagement and understanding. Recently staff have

had a focus on improving numeracy skills. Most children apply their skills in meaningful and relevant contexts throughout their play. For example, children use money at snack and measure during block play. Staff should continue to ensure rich, challenging opportunities for children to develop the STEM subjects. They should ensure a focus on the use of the language of learning when interacting with children and their families. This should support children to talk about their learning more broadly across the curriculum.

- Staff know and understand children and their families very well. They use information from home to record individual wellbeing targets for all children on entry to nursery. Staff make use of fortnightly planning to provide a balance of child and adult initiated learning. They skilfully plan for learning across the curriculum with a focus on literacy, numeracy and more recently, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. As a result, children develop their language and vocabulary knowledge well and have opportunities across the playroom to practise their number skills. Staff should now consider how to more effectively capture focused and progressive significant observations of learning. They should use information from their tracking to develop clearer and more challenging next steps for all children.
- Staff have established consistent systems for tracking learning. Staff use the very detailed and personalised 'All About Me' profiles as their starting point to inform their tracking systems. Children have access to interventions which are timely and effective, leading to improved levels of engagement. Staff, supported by senior leaders, should build confidence and skills in measuring the progress children make over time. This should ensure children consistently make progress across the early level.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	good
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	

- Staff have developed trusting, nurturing relationships with children and families. They have a sound understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and use these with children in a developmentally appropriate way. This supports children to be healthy, safe and active. For example, children keep safe by risk assessing their outdoor space and being active as they exercise daily. Families provide helpful information about their child’s experiences outside of nursery under each of the wellbeing indicators. Staff use this to build on what children know and can do as they transition into nursery. They involve children in this process by creating ‘All About Me’ posters. Staff support children well to understand and manage their emotions using a range of emotions tools. Staff should continue to keep these processes under review to ensure that any approach used is having a clear, positive impact on children. Staff provide a wide range of experiences which support children’s wellbeing very well. For example, all children have access to daily mindful activities and weekly music therapy.
- Senior leaders closely monitor attendance to ensure that any barriers to attendance are addressed. Staff know their children well and work closely with families to ensure that they understand the value of early learning and childcare.
- All children are valued and included. Staff know them as individuals with their own unique personality, needs and interests. Most children participate well in the life of the setting and are involved in decision making. For example, children were encouraged to share their view on where they enjoy mark making within the nursery to ensure spaces were resourced effectively. Children have ongoing opportunities to make choices, for example, where they should go on their trips and what they should have for snack. Staff use a wide range of approaches which

support all children in their learning. For example, they make use of a 16-week programme which supports children to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Staff use a range of assessment information to set individualised targets for all children. As planned, staff should ensure that these targets are measurable, provide appropriate challenge for children and take account of the full curriculum.

- Staff work closely with a range of specialists to ensure the right support for children at the right time. They identify where children may have barriers to their learning and ensure that appropriate support is put in place. Staff involve families well in this process to ensure a holistic assessment of the child. They ensure that assessment information is used effectively to develop individual, detailed plans for those children with an additional support need who require them. Staff have a clear understanding of their statutory duties and keep up to date with national and local guidance. They understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and ensure the care and wellbeing needs of all children are met.
- Staff have developed an inclusive ethos where everyone is treated with fairness and respect. They value and support diversity and ensure that a range of languages and cultures are celebrated within the nursery. They take positive steps to address any barriers to inclusion and understand the socio-economic context of the nursery.

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.

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.