3 November 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In August 2026, a team of HM Inspectors of Education visited Cornbank St James Primary School and Nursery. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Children and staff are proud of their school and nursery. Staff have developed very positive learning experiences based on the school values of respect, inclusion, safety and excellence. Children are enthusiastic and ready to learn.
- Staff across the school and nursery work together well to ensure children learn in engaging and nurturing environments. Staff have developed strong transition programmes that support continuity of learning for children as they move through education.
- Senior leaders provide strong and strategic leadership. They ensure staff have a clear focus on improving learning and teaching. As a result, teachers have improved approaches to planning which is helping children to make progress in their learning.
- Across the school, children have a good understanding of the wide range of skills they are developing through personal achievement opportunities.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Midlothian Council.

- Staff in the school and nursery should develop their practice to ensure all children receive sufficient challenge in their learning.
- Teachers and practitioners in the school and nursery need to continue to improve their checks on children's progress. Senior leaders need to use this information more effectively to address barriers to learning and raise children's attainment.
- Staff in the nursery and at early primary stages should continue to develop opportunities for children to work with the wider community.

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We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using two quality indicators from How good is our school (4th edition). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are HMIE's evaluations for Cornbank St James Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	**good**
Raising attainment and achievement	**good**
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school (4th edition) Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the ELC's work using two quality indicators from the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors.

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	**good**
Children's Progress	**good**

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the HMIE website at: Inspection reports | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland

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What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Midlothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Susan McDade
HM Inspector

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

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