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

# Summarised inspection findings

## Caledonia Primary School Early Years Class

## North Ayrshire Council

## 27 October 2026

HM Inspectors 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. This document provides our summarised findings.

## Key contextual information

Caledonia Early Years Class is situated within Caledonia Primary school. Children attend from the age of three until they start primary school. The class is registered for 50 children, with a current roll of 34 children. It is open term time and delivers 1140 hours through combined morning, afternoon and full day places from 8.00am till 6.00pm. A majority of children live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 and 2. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the early years class and is the registered manager. A full time nursery manager has day to day operational responsibility with support from a full time acting Senior Early Years Practitioner (SEYP). The are a further 4.1 full time equivalent early years practitioners. The nursery manager has been in post for 7 years and the acting SEYP for a few weeks. The team has experienced several staffing changes recently which have impacted on the pace of change.

| **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

- Children benefit from warm, caring and respectful relationships with staff. Staff know children very well and interact with them in a calm, nurturing and responsive manner. This helps children to feel safe, secure and to engage purposefully in their learning and play. Children who are new to the setting develop well their understanding of routines and expectations. This enables them to settle successfully and participate well.

- Staff make effective use of both indoor and outdoor learning environments. They thoughtfully organise and increasingly adapt the learning environments in response to children's interests, ideas and emerging curiosities. Staff gather useful information about children through direct observation, All About Me information, 28-day observations and discussions with children and families. This information is increasingly used to shape learning experiences around children's interests and prior learning. As a result, most children are motivated and sustain their

 © Crown Copyright

engagement in play. A few children would benefit from more support to sustain their focus and engagement as this will help to deepen their learning further.

- Staff use play and everyday experiences to encourage children to share ideas, cooperate, communicate and develop their vocabulary. This supports children's language, communication and social development. A few children need more support to develop their language skills in order to contribute more fully to conversations during play. A few staff extend children's thinking through highly effective questioning, discussion and shared exploration. Senior leaders should build on these strengths by developing greater consistency of high-quality interactions between all staff and children. Staff should continue to use national practice guidance to help them to develop children's curiosity, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills.

- Staff are committed to using professional learning to improve their practice. They are developing well their understanding of how to use observations of play to inform subsequent learning experiences.

- Staf plan learning and play appropriately over different timescales. There are opportunities to streamline their planning approaches further so that it is more purposeful and clearly focused on children's learning and development. They should extend planning to focus on the development of all aspects of the child, beyond literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This will help staff to provide a broader range of learning experiences that reflect individual children's developmental needs.

- All children have learning journals which showcase well their participation in activities across the setting. They record effectively the range of activities that children engage in through their learning and play. Staff should continue to extend the use of learning journals to record children's learning more consistently. This will help them to identify better children's next steps in learning.

- Positively, staff involve children in activities and give them a range of opportunities to make decisions in their play. They are beginning to provide children with opportunities to reflect on, discuss and influence their learning. As this approach is embedded, it will help staff to gather and understand children's interests, intentions and achievements more fully.

 © Crown Copyright

| Children's Progress | good |
|---|---|

This quality indicator reflects the extent to which children are making meaningful progress in their learning and development over time. It focuses on the holistic nature of children's learning and development. It ensures these foundations are secure to achieve future success and attainment. It requires a clear and shared understanding of early learning pedagogy and child development, supported by strong pedagogical leadership. It reflects the integrated way children learn and the importance of high-quality interactions, experiences and spaces. It emphasises that high-quality early learning and childcare (ELC) contributes to closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all.

This quality indicator has a strong emphasis on the use of data and meaningful evidence to inform future planning and to report to parents/carers about their child's progress. It recognises the vital role of early learning and childcare in closing the poverty-related attainment gap and ensuring equity for all children.

The themes are:

- • children's progress over time
- • overall quality of children's achievements
- • ensuring equity for all children

- Most children make good progress and achieve well in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. Children requiring additional support achieve well, with targeted interventions reducing barriers to learning. This results in greater independence, improved relationships, and increased engagement in play and learning. A few children would benefit from more consistent support to further develop their communication and interaction skills.

- Most children are confident, resilient and increasingly independent. Children make choices about their learning and manage personal care tasks, such as dressing for outdoor play, with increasing independence. They demonstrate a good understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, they adopt the role of risk assessor which allows them to highlight and address risks confidently. Most children show kindness and respect when playing with others. A few children need further support to build on their interaction skills with their peers. Most children develop their gross and fine motor skills well through a range of experiences. They participate enthusiastically in physical play, developing balance, coordination and control. A few children are ready for greater challenge to extend their physical skills further.

- Most children develop early language and communication skills well through a range of meaningful experiences. They listen attentively, follow instructions and enjoy sharing and retelling familiar stories through imaginative play. A few children require more support to extend their vocabulary and expressive language skills in order to participate more fully in conversations. Staff should use total communication approaches more consistently to support the progress for a few children.

- A majority of children are making good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. They confidently apply mathematical language and concepts during everyday play and routines. They count, match, measure and problem-solve as they measure the height of block towers, make potions and count in real life situations. This is helping children to develop their confidence in using numeracy skills in meaningful contexts. Children would benefit from more

 © Crown Copyright

real-life contexts for learning, both in the class and local community. This will help them to see their skill development and increase their confidence in applying skills for work.

- Senior leaders and staff use a range of helpful evidence to assess children's learning and development. Their newly introduced tracking in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is beginning to provide a clearer outline of children's progress over time. Staff are developing confidence in applying a shared understanding of standards which supports more accurate professional judgements of children's progress. Senior leaders should now strengthen the tracking of children's developmental skills and progress, such as independence, self-care, social interactions and transitions. They should improve the evaluative quality of observations to support their assessment of learning and progress. This should provide a more holistic picture of children's progress and achievements and support more consistent planning for children's next steps in learning.

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements effectively through praise, learning journals and displays of learning. Children develop confidence, self-esteem and pride in their successes. They are increasingly able to recognise their own progress and talk positively about their achievements.

- Strong communication with families supports children's progress well. Daily interactions and online learning journals provide meaningful opportunities for parents to engage with and contribute to children's learning. This helps staff to gain a full picture of children's development and supports continuity between home and learning experiences in the setting.

- Senior leaders and staff know children and families well, including those facing additional challenges. Attendance is high for most children. Senior leaders monitor attendance effectively and provide targeted support where needed. This has improved engagement for a few families and helps ensure children benefit fully from their learning experiences.

 © Crown Copyright

## Safeguarding

- The Early Years Class 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 early years class and the education authority.

 © Crown Copyright

## 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.


© Crown Copyright