

Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

Ormiston Primary School Nursery

East Lothian Council

3 February 2026

In November 2025, a team of inspectors from HMIE and the Care Inspectorate visited Ormiston Primary School Nursery. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

Key inspection findings

- The staff team were enthusiastic and committed to their own professional learning and the development of the service. They maximised opportunities to learn from each other.
- Staff foster supportive, caring relationships with children and ensure a nurturing, safe environment for learning. Interactions between children and staff are warm and kind promoting children's emotional security and wellbeing. This is leading to sustained engagement where children are settled, calm and ready to learn.
- Staff have developed approaches to planning which are leading to a clear focus on children's interests and on them leading their own learning. There is now a need to ensure consistency in the quality of daily responsive planning and staff interactions.
- Senior leaders should ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to align with national guidance.

HM Inspectors and the Care Inspectorate gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the setting's work using four quality indicators from [the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors](#).

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Nurturing, care and support	good
Children's progress	good

Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual Information

Ormiston Primary School Nursery is located in the grounds of Ormiston Primary School. The nursery is registered for 30 children at any one time, aged from three years to those not yet attending school. There are currently 40 children on the roll attending between the hours of 8.15 a.m. and 5.45 p.m. Parents can choose a variety of attendance patterns such as two days full time. The nursery is a 48-week provision.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery, supported by the deputy headteacher. Further staffing includes one senior early years practitioner (SEYP), four early years practitioners (EYP) and two early years support workers (EYSW).

The nursery consists of one large open plan playroom with direct access to an outdoor space. The school dining hall is used for lunches.

Leadership: – Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff confidently explained how recent professional learning had influenced their practice and improved outcomes for children. The in-service day was highlighted as particularly valuable, with workshops on risky play, outdoor play, and communication strategies. Staff shared examples of improvements, such as enhanced snack routines and effective use of 'setting the table,' showing clear links between learning and practice. These experiences strengthened knowledge and encouraged reflection on how approaches impact children's experiences. To further enhance outcomes, staff could revisit best practice guidance and policy such as Realising the Ambition, being me and trauma-informed practice.

Staff engaged in professional discussion and reflection through meetings and daily dialogue. They shared their learning with each other following attending training. Some led experiences based on their strengths, such as woodland activities. This contributed to shared learning, understanding and effective practice. They worked closely with other settings to improve snack-time routines and celebrate the work they had done to improve floor books for children. These actions fostered a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, with staff looking inwards, outwards, and forwards.

Professional development reviews provided staff with opportunities to celebrate successes and identify individual areas for growth. The introduction of one-to-one meetings with the Senior early years practitioner further supported staff wellbeing and allowed discussion of areas where additional support may be needed. Staff files and training records varied in detail. We suggested staff record their professional

learning and reflect on the impact this has on their practice and experiences for children. This will ensure core learning is maintained and continuous professional development requirements are met as part of their professional registration.

The provider should ensure all policies and procedures are reviewed and updated to reflect current national and best practice guidance. For example, the child protection policy did not reference current national guidance and the complaints policy contained outdated contact details. Child Protection Coordinators should play a key role in policy reviews and should strengthen safeguarding oversight and quality assurance (see area for improvement 1)

Areas for improvement

To ensure children are kept safe and protected and staff have clear, current guidance to support effective practice the provider should review and update policies and procedures.

This should include but is not limited to:

1. Updating and reviewing child protection policies and procedures to ensure that all staff have a shared understanding.
2. Ensuring that the complaint policy is updated with relevant information and contact details.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

All staff foster caring, supportive relationships with children and families. As a result most children feel valued, safe and build confidence as they explore their nursery environment. Throughout the session most children independently engage in play with their friends for sustained periods of time negotiating and taking turns. A few children would benefit from a greater level of support as they make choices about where they would like to play and the resources on offer.

Most children investigate and explore their play spaces enthusiastically as they free flow between indoors and outdoors. They are interested in new learning and ask questions to deepen their understanding. Staff provide a range of interesting experiences and involve children in decision making, for example, the songs they would like to sing. They should now work to increase the level of challenge on offer as they continue to develop their indoor and outdoor spaces. For example, through the

range of resources and experiences on offer. This should include access to areas which are high-quality and promote curiosity, enthusiasm and independence.

All staff know children well and interact responsively with care, patience and attention. This is a key strength of the nursery. All staff model the nursery values of kindness, respect and honesty in their interactions with each other. They listen to children and display a genuine interest in their ideas. Most staff use quality questioning and commentary to support and challenge children's thinking. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to develop skills in quality interaction to deepen thinking and learning for all children. This should include work on quality questioning, commenting and modelling.

Children use a selection of digital technologies well, for example, tablet computers which they use to support numeracy learning. Staff should continue to develop the use of technology, for example, through the planned collaborative school project, to enrich children's learning.

Staff and senior leaders have worked together to develop their approaches to planning children's learning. Planning now includes a flexible yearly overview, a flexible termly plan, a weekly working plan and responsive planning. Staff involve children well during the planning process. They use children's ideas and interests as the starting point for future learning, for example, through the use of floorbooks. All staff make regular observations of children's significant learning and record these in their learning journals, daily responsive planning and floorbooks. Staff professional learning in this area is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of observations recorded within the learning journals. At times these are not detailed or specific enough about children's learning. Senior leaders should now monitor the quality and frequency of observations recorded through the daily responsive planning. This should ensure that all significant learning is captured, evaluated and extended.

All staff benefit from termly learning conversations with senior leaders. They use the holistic information gathered on individual children to respond appropriately to their needs. Staff plan individual next steps for children to address any gaps in development across the curriculum. Senior leaders should support staff further to ensure that all planned next steps are focused, measurable and of a consistently high quality.

Practitioners make use of helpful tools from the local authority to effectively monitor and track the progress children make over time. These provide valuable information about how children are progressing in their learning within early language and communication, numeracy and mathematics and wellbeing.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Staff created a nurturing environment that promoted children's emotional security and wellbeing. Positive relationships, comfort, and reassurance supported individual needs, and keyworker groups strengthened bonds, resulting in enhanced personalised care and support.

Staff worked hard to create snack and lunch routines that encouraged choice, involvement, and social interaction. They planned well, adapted approaches, and supported children through conversation and guidance. Transitions were calm and child-centred, children had opportunities to serve themselves. As a result, children developed independence, confidence, and social skills while enjoying a positive, healthy dining experience.

The service could review what spaces are available for children to sleep, rest and relax. Mats were stored in the office and available when needed, and children could use the home corner bed or story area sofa. However, these were mainly play spaces and not fully restful. Staff could consider creating calm, comfortable area with soft furnishings and adjusted lighting to support children's longer day. This would provide better opportunities to rest and feel comfortable throughout the day.

Personal plans were in place and reviewed with families every six months, supporting collaboration and strong relationships. However, some inconsistencies across plans were identified. For instance, some gaps in wellbeing chronologies and a few strategies identified from other professionals were not part of individual support plans. This resulted in inconsistent approaches to support children's overall wellbeing. Using the wellbeing indicators as part of planning and accessing children's strengths and needs would contribute to a more holistic approach in getting it right for all children.

Families were welcomed into the service through purposeful opportunities such as wellbeing reviews, stay-and-play sessions, 'come dine with me', and daily interactions at drop-off and collection. Staff supported families with initiatives such as the Rookie's Pantry and links with community organisations. Visible information, staff photos, and signposting strengthened connections, while positive feedback from families reflected strong relationships and engagement. As a result, these efforts contributed positively to children's care, development, and overall outcomes.

Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Almost all children make choices independently throughout their nursery session. They share their learning confidently with their friends and members of staff, for example, when talking about their learning journals. Staff work effectively to address any barriers to attendance. As planned, staff should continue to look at

creative ways to encourage families to attend for a larger proportion of their session. This should lead to accelerated progress.

Staff prioritise children's wellbeing and as a result most children are making good progress and are developing confidence. Almost all children regulate their emotions well within nursery and are calm, happy and settled. They follow nursery routines well throughout their session and during times of transition, for example, to the school hall for lunch.

Most children are making good progress in early language and literacy. Most talk confidently to each other and take part in extended conversations as they play. They listen well to their friends and respond with enthusiasm. A majority of children approach staff to ask questions. They enjoy learning about new facts and considering different ideas. Most children show an interest in mark making. They mark make with confidence in a range of contexts, inside and outside and for a variety of purposes. A few children are beginning to form letters that mean something to them, for example, the letters in their name. Almost all children enjoy listening to stories and most are able to talk about the story and offer their ideas and thoughts on it.

Most children are making good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. They recognise and use numbers to 10 in their play and routines. Most children have an early understanding of positional language and can give simple directions. They use these skills in a number of ways, for example, when following treasure maps and accessing digital maps online. The planned digital work with the school on using programmable toys should further enrich these experiences. Most children enjoy measuring in their play environment and confidently use comparative vocabulary, for example, shorter, taller.

Staff's tracking of learning indicates that most children are making good progress across the curriculum and over time. A wider range of open-ended resources indoors could further develop creativity skills and lead to accelerated progress in, for example, the arts.

Staff effectively celebrate children's individual achievements through ongoing praise and encouragement. They support parents to share children's achievements from home through the 'wow wall' and through entries in their child's learning journal. These approaches support well children's sense of self and wellbeing. Children develop independence as they carry out jobs within the nursery such as making their own snacks. This supports children to build skills across the curriculum. Staff should now consider how this information from home could be used to inform planning, building on prior learning.

The nursery team take positive steps to ensure equity for all. Families are involved in their child's learning through, for example, 'stay and play' and 'come dine with me' experiences. Staff make effective use of data and information to ensure children

make appropriate progress. They are aware of children's socio-economic circumstances and take sensitive steps to address this. Children who require additional support with their learning have individualised planning in place which details key interventions and strategies to be used. Staff should now ensure that all strategies identified are consistently used on the floor with children. This should include making effective use of strategies provided by external professionals.

Safeguarding (HMIE)

- Inspectors discussed safeguarding and child protection information provided by the ELC setting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the ELC setting and the education authority.

Outcome of inspection

We are confident that the ELC setting has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

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