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

Summarised inspection findings

Northmuir Primary School Nursery Class

Angus Council

17 November 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

Northmuir Primary School Nursery Class is situated within the town of Kirriemuir, Angus. Children attend from age two until they start primary school. The setting is registered for 66 children at any one time. The current roll is 52 children. A minority of children are experiencing an additional year of nursery.

The nursery is open for 46.6 weeks of the year with children attending a range of part day and full day sessions. The setting comprises of a large playroom which has open free flow access to an enclosed garden area.

The nursery is led by the headteacher who is also the registered manager. There are 19 staff members including a lead senior early years' practitioner (LSEYP), two senior early years' practitioners (SEYP), 14 early years' practitioners (EYP) and two early years' assistants (EYA).

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 receive a warm welcome into the playroom. They are well supported by staff who are kind and nurturing. Children are happy, safe, secure and are developing well their confidence when playing. They are motivated and engaged and are supported well by staff to develop their independence and make choices as they play. Children new to the nursery settle well. Senior leaders and staff plan transitions for children thoughtfully, including useful home visits, focusing on children's wellbeing. They invite parents into nursery to support new children feel supported and to share their learning. A few children benefit from, and receive, well-planned and sensitive adult support to engage more fully in purposeful play across the day.

 © Crown Copyright

- Staff interact well with children. They make effective use of questions and comments to sustain children's interests, extend their thinking and work positively together. All staff are responsive to children's interests and make good use of spontaneous opportunities to support and extend learning. Together they support children well to prepare and serve snacks. Children would benefit from further opportunities to develop their independence during lunchtimes.

- Senior leaders and staff provide a wide range of toys and resources to support children's play and learning, including a stimulating range of open-ended materials. Children enjoy freely accessing the extensive outdoor play space in all weathers. Staff plan carefully considered areas which provide opportunities to develop children's curiosity, creativity, resilience and independence. Children benefit from the freedom to explore, be curious and to be active. Staff encourage children to take risks when playing outdoors. For example, they confidently climb trees and create models using woodwork tools. Staff provide opportunities for children to explore the local community through regular 'wonder walks' and performances at the community centre.

- Children have opportunities to use a range of technology toys to support learning. They enjoy using magnifiers and binoculars when exploring leaves and minibeasts outside. Children should now have improved access to a wider range of digital technologies indoors and outdoors to develop these important skills and support learning across the curriculum.

- Staff plan responsively and build effectively on children's interests to extend learning as they play. Staff record children's learning in useful learning journals. These contain detailed narrative and photographs of children's learning along with their next steps. Senior leaders and staff recognise that they should develop further approaches to plan more adult-initiated experiences across the curriculum. This should help children make continued progress in their identified next steps in learning.

- Staff plan for children's learning using a range of approaches, such as floorbooks. As identified, they should develop this approach further, to involve children more in planning their own learning. Senior leaders meet regularly with staff to discuss children's learning. Together they track children's learning across key aspects of the curriculum. Senior leaders should now support staff to extend these approaches across wider areas of the curriculum.

 © 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 are making good progress in literacy and numeracy over time. A few children are capable of making better progress as a result of their nursery experiences. Most children demonstrate their growing communication skills well in a range of contexts and with different audiences. Staff encourage children to use their numerical and mathematics skills when engaging in experiences within the nursery and outdoor area. Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing well their understanding of emotions.

- Senior leaders and staff have developed very positive and trusting relationships with children and families. They know children well as individuals and as learners. They use this information effectively to identify and plan appropriate support for their learning and development. When required, senior leaders work with professional partners effectively to enhance further this support. As a result, almost all children who receive additional support are making good progress towards their individual targets.

- Staff use a range of systems to record children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders recognise the importance of developing these systems further to ensure that all children's progress is maximised. Moving forward, senior leaders should support staff further to track children's experiences and progress across wider areas of learning. This should support staff to ensure that all children experience progressive learning that builds on children's skills and abilities across the whole curriculum.

- Staff celebrate children's individual successes and achievements meaningfully through, for example group times. They encourage families to share children's achievements from home. Parents share what children have learned at home or children's participation in clubs through the 'proud cloud'. Moving forward, staff should encourage families to share more regularly their children's learning at home. They should track children's achievements and the skills that they develop as a result of this learning. Staff need to use information about children's

 © Crown Copyright

achievements from outwith nursery to plan additional experiences. This should support all children to develop a wider range of skills and build on existing skills progressively.

- Overall attendance at the nursery is good. Senior leaders have developed clear procedures to ensure that children's attendance is recorded daily. They make direct contact with families or emergency contacts when children do not come to nursery as expected. Senior leaders and staff recognise the importance of continuing to engage with families to support them to understand the importance of attendance in relation to children's progress and achievement.

- Senior leaders understand well the socio-economic, cultural and linguistic barriers that the nursery community faces. They take steps to minimise, where possible, potential barriers to children's learning and development. They ensure that there is no cost for families and children's participation in nursery activities. Staff make sensitive provision of clothing and footwear for outdoor activities. All families can access toothbrushes, books from a lending library and surplus food and milk. This is leading to improved outcomes for all children.

© Crown Copyright

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.

© 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