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

Summarised inspection findings

Croftmalloch Primary School Nursery Class

West Lothian Council

3 November 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

Croftmalloch Nursery Class is situated in a residential area of Whitburn within West Lothian. The nursery is located within the school building and has a separate secure entrance. There is one large playroom with direct access to a large, well-resourced and secure outdoor area. Children also benefit from a garden area for planting and growing and a forest area that the children regularly access.

The setting is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for a maximum of 80 children aged two to those not yet attending primary school. The 50-week provision offers three options for parents. They can select between morning, afternoon or full day patterns of attendance. Currently there are 65 children on the roll.

The newly appointed, experienced headteacher has overall responsibility for the setting. The headteacher will now be the named manager and will take leadership responsibility for the nursery. The early years officer has responsibility for day-to-day support and guidance of the nursery team. The wider team includes a peripatetic early learning and childcare area support manager, seven early years practitioners and three support workers. The nursery team has experienced changes to staffing within the last year.

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 aged two to three years

- Staff are kind, caring and responsive as they build positive relationships with the youngest children in the setting. Most children are happy and secure as they play and settle into nursery. They engage well in a wide range of appropriate play experiences where children

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are curious, creative and increasingly independent. They get ready for outdoor play, access resources and become familiar with routines. Staff have an understanding of schemas and use these well to support the individual needs of two-year-olds.

Children aged three years and over

- All staff have developed caring, positive and respectful relationships with children. Children are happy and secure in the setting and there is a warm, welcoming ethos. Staff respond sensitively to children's changing needs over the course of the day, providing opportunities for rest and relaxation. Children feel secure as a result of sensitive support and encouragement. Staff are positive role models and display kind, calm and nurturing interactions.

- Children express their opinions and make choices at snack time, lunch time and as they choose where to play. This is visible in planning and floorbook evaluations. However, opportunities for children's voice to shape learning experiences and improvement priorities should be developed further. A few children are ready for increased levels of responsibility and to more regularly lead improvements. This could be through increased involvement with children across the wider school community.

- Staff have created attractive, well-resourced learning environments. Children benefit from a range of high-quality indoor and outdoor spaces including a well-used woodland area which develops curiosity, investigation and problem-solving skills. Staff make use of the local community to enhance children's experiences with visits to a nearby care home and shops. Most children engage well and sustain their involvement in the wide range of purposeful and meaningful learning experiences. Children do not currently experience sufficient opportunities to engage in learning using digital technology. As identified by senior leaders, staff should plan more frequent opportunities for children to explore a wider range of digital technology to develop their confidence in this area and extend their learning.

- Most staff respond skilfully to children's individual learning needs and interests. The team should continue to develop and share effective approaches to questioning and sustained shared thinking. Staff need to ensure that all children experience consistently high-quality interactions that extend learning and deepen engagement.

- All staff have a sound knowledge of children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use information about children's progress well to plan children's learning intentionally. Staff are responsive to children's interests to plan responsive child-led learning. Most staff make careful observations of children's significant learning which they record on an individual online platform. A few staff need to develop further their skills and confidence in recording observations that capture significant learning for children. The team use information gathered to support them to identify next steps in learning for each child in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff should ensure that all next steps are meaningful and relevant.

- Staff use local authority tracking tools and progression pathways to track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders meet three times a year to discuss observations and tracker statement evaluations to make robust judgements about children's progress in these areas. They use information gathered well, to identify gaps in children's learning and provide targeted support for children who require additional help.

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Senior leaders should now develop a more consistent approach to identifying and planning for challenge.

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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

Children aged two to three years

- Children make good progress in their learning and development as they settle into nursery alongside new children and staff. They develop further their communication and extend their vocabulary and begin to use single words and gestures to express their needs. Children follow instructions and, listen attentively as staff sing instructions and rhyming songs. A few children enjoy using their whole body to respond to music in the sensory room. All children would benefit from continued use of smaller, cosy sensory spaces at key times in their day.

Children aged three years and over

- Children make good progress across their learning for their age, stage of development and individual needs. Staff support children well to become increasingly confident and responsible learners. The team have a clear focus on health and wellbeing. Children feel included, valued and important within the setting. Staff support children to make frequent choices in their learning as they decide where to play and risk assess their forest area with staff. Children are developing positive self-esteem as they develop close relationships with staff and other children. They persevere and work together to make sure their forest area is safe for play. Most children are independent as they wash their hands and help prepare snacks and lunches. Children enjoy daily discussions with staff that explore their feelings and how they can keep safe and healthy.

- Most children develop their creativity and independence well as they create detailed models from recycled material. Small groups of children spend extended periods playing in the sand and exploring the properties of clay. A few children use their knowledge of, and explore their interest in, letters and sounds as they make birthday cards and mark make in their floorbooks. Most children develop well their listening, communication skills and communicate with increasing confidence with their peers, staff and visitors. A few children enjoy beginning to use signs and gestures to communicate their needs. Children develop their numeracy skills as they

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follow recipes to make soup from vegetables they have grown in the garden and count in familiar routines. Children now need to apply and develop further their skills in experiences that better match their prior learning and skills, particularly in literacy and early numeracy. This should help all children build on and extend their skills.

- The team value and praise when children try a new experience or achieve a milestone at home and within nursery. Staff and parents frequently discuss children's learning, needs and achievements in daily interactions at the start and end of the day. Children's achievements are displayed on the cloakroom wellbeing tree. Parents also share children's achievements from home using an online system. This means staff know children very well as individuals, they understand what motivates and interests learners. The team should now work together with parents and children to identify how these achievements demonstrate children's skills, strengths and needs. This should better inform how senior leaders and staff plan and evaluate targeted interventions to ensure all children make the very best progress.

- Individual staff gather and use a wide range of information about the progress all children make in their learning. Senior leaders have rightly identified that the team should now continue to develop their confidence, experience and skills in using data to inform their work. The team need to further develop how they use what they know about what children can do to ensure all experiences and interactions challenge children to apply and extend their skills.

- All staff use a range of data and information to identify children who may be experience barriers to learning. When required, they establish individualised planning with strategies to support children. As a result of successful strategies, children make good progress. Senior leaders should further develop how staff use data to evaluate interventions to ensure the greatest impact on children's progress.

- All staff understand the cultural, socio-economic and linguistic context in which children live. They work effectively with parents and partners, building positive relationships and communicating clearly. Staff are particularly strong in developing trusting and supportive relationships with parents to offer a range of supports to reduce potential barriers to children's learning and development. Parents can access the school food and clothing banks. The nursery provides outdoor clothing for all children to ensure that they can access regular outdoor learning experiences. Parents are included and increasingly comfortable in the nursery as they participate in family engagement sessions, including stay and play and forest play sessions. These sessions have strengthened parents understanding and confidence in supporting their children's learning and development. They provide valuable opportunities for families to build social connections and develop a sense of community.

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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.

- Senior leaders and staff monitor children's attendance carefully. Staff and parents work very well together to maximise children's time in nursery. The team sensitively identify and provide practical support to parents to ensure children benefit from their full entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning.

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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.

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