

Summarised inspection findings

Lunnasting Primary School Nursery Class

Shetlands Islands Council

30 June 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

Lunnasting Nursery is part of Lunnasting Primary School. It provides early learning and childcare (ELC) in the village of Vidlin on the rural east coast of mainland Shetland. It caters for children aged three to those not yet attending school. The nursery is registered for 12 children at any one time. There are currently 14 children on the roll. The nursery is a term-time provision, and children attend between the hours of 8.45 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The headteacher of the school has overall responsibility for the nursery. She is supported by a senior early years practitioner. Further staffing includes one early years practitioner and one early years support worker.

The nursery consists of one playroom with direct access to an outdoor area. Children make use of the school hall for lunches.

Curriculum	very good
This quality indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs, interests, rights and progress of children at the centre of curriculum design and implementation. <u>Curriculum</u> is defined as the totality of all that is planned for children from ELC, through school and beyond. It emphasises that children are entitled to a curriculum underpinned by the <u>principles of curriculum design</u> and enriched through meaningful learning experiences indoors, outdoors and within the community. It recognises the need for all children to experience opportunities to develop the interests, knowledge, skills, and attributes they will need to adapt, thrive and achieve in today’s world. This quality indicator also recognises the importance of the curriculum supporting progress in children’s learning as they enter the setting and at key points of transition. The themes are: • curriculum rationale and design • continuity and progression in the curriculum • partnerships • skills for life and learning	

■ Children experience an exciting and dynamic curriculum across the indoor spaces, in the nursery garden, within their local community and beyond. Staff ensure that the curriculum is strongly based on the setting’s core values and that it takes account of their strong Shetland heritage. Children benefit from being part of a community steeped in history and are surrounded by rich outdoor spaces to explore. Children regularly visit the beach and are surrounded by sea life, including Sammy, the local seal. All staff place high importance on the wellbeing of children. They uphold the values consistently as they interact with each other and with children and families. All staff are committed to ongoing study and ensure that this has a direct impact on improving outcomes for children. As a result, children benefit from a highly skilled staff team who have a deep understanding of pedagogy and early childhood development. Staff consistently ensure that experiences are relevant, appropriate and motivating for all children. All staff lead on aspects of improvement as they continually reflect

and develop the curriculum they provide for children. As a result, children experience a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

- The headteacher and staff have a very clear understanding of their rationale for curriculum design. They continually review and improve their curriculum involving children and families very well in this process. Staff ensure that curricular developments take account of their local context. They use their knowledge of the interests and backgrounds of their children to further support this work. Staff ensure a wide range of experiences across the curriculum which support children very effectively to develop their curiosity and creativity skills. As a result, almost all children display imagination and confidence as they actively lead their own learning. Staff support children to take ownership of their nursery. They value children's ideas and opinions. Children enjoy the challenge of being involved in developing their garden space and voting on new resources. Staff should celebrate their strong curriculum by recording and sharing their curriculum rationale. This will support them to share the uniqueness of their setting and the rich curriculum on offer.
- Staff provide a range of digital technologies to support aspects of the curriculum. Children use the internet for research and produce detailed artwork using an online application. As planned, staff should re-introduce digital experiences that offer further challenge for those children requiring this, for example, the use of animation.
- Staff provide opportunities for families to share in their child's learning through helpful planned stay and play sessions at the start and end of the nursery day. Staff work in close partnership with families and value highly the contributions they make to enrich the curriculum. Children visit a parent's Polygrub to plant their own vegetables and families come into the setting to talk about their jobs. Staff make effective use of a number of long-standing partnerships within the local community to enrich the curriculum. Children regularly attend a local intergenerational community gathering where they can socialise and develop their communication skills. Children develop their sense of citizenship and pride in being a valued member of the community.
- All children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop skills for life and learning. They take part in meaningful local events which supports well their understanding of sustainability. They recently took part in the 'Voar Redd Up,' a Shetland wide Spring initiative to tidy up the island. Children developed confidence as they made a valuable contribution to the wider school community.

Learning, teaching and assessment	very 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	

- All staff prioritise building and maintaining positive relationships with children and families. Staff know their children very well. They ensure a welcoming ethos where children learn and have fun together. Almost all children are settled and ready to learn. Staff work very effectively as a team and are passionate about getting it right for children. They ensure children experience a consistent approach which supports them to feel safe and secure. Almost all children follow routines independently, for example, as they get ready for lunch. Children have an experience of being a leader as they choose the snack and prepare this for their friends. As planned, staff should involve children in a wider range of leadership roles to provide further challenge. Almost all children are highly motivated as they play with their friends for extended periods of time.
- Staff have considered carefully their indoor and outdoor spaces and have used a range of audits to successfully support this work. Children benefit from a high-quality environment which is welcoming and nurturing. Staff keep spaces under review and regularly develop areas to ensure the needs of children are well met. Staff have developed the use of the tinkering table over time and is currently used to support and develop fine motor control. Staff attend training and ensure this has a positive impact on the experiences children receive. This includes professional learning in block play which has upskilled staff to support children in this area of their play. This has led to children who are highly engaged and produce detailed structures using their imagination and creativity skills. All children are motivated by the provocations provided and use the wide range of open-ended resources available indoors and outdoors very well. Staff consider carefully the flow of the day and ensure time for children to be active as well as times for them to rest and relax. Children participate in regular, planned visits within the local community and further afield. They enjoy regular visits to the local beach and to a nearby

town to take part in the folk festival. As a result, children are learning about the rich traditions and local environment.

- Staff know children very well as individuals and interact with genuine interest and enthusiasm. All staff adopt a nurturing approach, leading to children who are confident and thriving in their environment. Almost all staff use quality questions, supportive commentary and modelling to challenge thinking and deepen learning. Staff should continue to keep the balance of observing and interacting under review to ensure that opportunities to extend learning are maximised. Staff support children well to access appropriate digital technology. Children are encouraged to take part in surveys and conduct research using the interactive whiteboard. Children know their views are taken into account. Children are skilled in using digital devices to support their learning.
- Staff have a very clear approach to planning for children's learning. They use information provided from home and regular team meetings to share what they know about each child's individual learning and development. They have developed a comprehensive planning system which ensures an appropriate balance of responsive and intentional learning. Staff are responsive to children's interests and record these within highly effective floorbooks and within children's individual learning stories. Children and families are involved in this process and are encouraged to contribute. Children's individual learning stories are located on their pegs to ensure easy access for parents. This supports family involvement in their child's learning journey. Staff record quality observations of learning using these stories and consider possible lines of development. Senior leaders should keep the learning stories under review to ensure a consistent approach to how often observations are recorded.
- Staff meet regularly to ensure a shared understanding of children's progress. They use helpful local authority trackers and developmental overviews alongside their observations and floorbook to identify gaps in children's learning. Staff use this information effectively to develop measurable, individualised next steps for children. As planned, staff should embed the systems in place for recording and evaluating next steps for individual children to ensure a consistent approach.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	very good
This quality indicator highlights the importance of positive relationships and children's wellbeing. It recognises the importance of providing high quality, inclusive, and appropriate rights-based support. These approaches result in improved outcomes for children's learning, wellbeing and participation. It takes full account of children who may require additional support to access and benefit fully from their entitlement to high quality ELC. This includes identifying and assessing their learning and wellbeing needs in a timely manner and providing personalised and targeted support. This quality indicator recognises that strong, collaborative partnership working between those supporting children is essential. It highlights the importance of meaningful engagement with children and families to inform decisions about how children's needs should be met. This quality indicator emphasises the important role senior leaders play in ensuring all staff have relevant and worthwhile professional learning to meet the diverse and sometimes complex needs of children. The themes are: • positive relationships and wellbeing • universal support • Identifying and assessing learning needs and targeted support • inclusion and equality	

- Staff prioritise the wellbeing of all children. They pride themselves in the long-standing positive relationships they hold with children and families within the local community. This is reflected in the joyful ethos of the nursery where children and staff are motivated to learn together. Staff model kind and respectful relationships in their work with children and each other. They calmly support children very well to understand and manage their emotions. They use a feelings check-in to support children to identify they are feeling. Staff use a range of visuals effectively to support this discussion. Staff provide sensitive support for individual children when they require extra help to manage their emotions. They use a range of approaches to support children to feel calm and safe within their environment, for example, mindfulness and yoga sessions. Staff make effective use of the national wellbeing indicators. They use these in a meaningful, developmentally appropriate way with children. This includes, how to stay safe around water. Staff use the indicators well to provide holistic assessment of all children.
- Staff closely track trends in attendance to ensure that any barriers to attending can be identified and overcome. Staff know their children and families very well and sensitively provide support when required to ensure all children receive their full entitlement of early learning and childcare.
- Staff are committed to providing the right support at the right time for all children. They use the helpful information provided by families within the 'what matters to me' booklets as their starting point. All children have measurable learning targets in place which support them very well to make progress. Children and families are involved in this process.

- Staff listen attentively to all children and value their ideas and contributions. They involve children meaningfully in decision making, for example, children voting on new resources to be purchased. Staff make use of a range of approaches to support all children in their learning. Effective practice includes staff have promoted imagination in storytelling by scribing children's stories and supporting them to make their own books. Staff collaborate with a range of partners and services to ensure a wide range of high-quality experiences for all children. Children experience an annual block of drumming from a specialist. Children are motivated and engaged in their learning through high quality musical experiences.
- Staff know children very well. They ensure additional support or extra challenge is in place when this is required to support the best possible progress for individual children. Staff provide targeted small group and individual support to encourage children to develop their language and communication skills. Staff work closely with specialist partners when required, for example, the home visiting service. They have a very clear understanding of their statutory duties and keep up to date with national and local guidance. Staff are clear of their responsibilities to keep children safe and ensure the care and wellbeing needs of all children are met.
- Staff have a very clear understanding of their unique context and promote a culture where community and relationships are a priority. They are proud of their rich heritage and support the community to keep this alive. Children have ongoing exposure to the Shetland Dialect and take part and learn about festivals such as the 'Up helly aa.' Staff ensure motivating opportunities for children to learn about different cultures and the wider world in which they grow. They make use of a range of resources to support this work. Staff sensitively provide information for families on useful services they can access should they require this.

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.

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.