

Summarised inspection findings

Mid Yell Junior High School Nursery

Shetlands Islands Council

23 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

Mid Yell ELC is located within Mid Yell Junior High School, Yell, Shetland. The nursery comprises of one large playroom, with extended spaces, including an indoor/outdoor area. The nursery is registered for 22 children aged from two years to those not yet attending school at any given time. The current roll is 12 children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. Children attend from 8.45 am – 3.45 pm term time. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery, alongside one principal teacher who supports the nursery team. Staffing consists of one senior early years practitioner, one early years practitioner and two early years support workers.

Curriculum	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	

- Staff have developed and built their curriculum on trusting and nurturing relationships. They promote the rights of all children as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They use local and national guidance, alongside practitioner enquiry to review and refresh their curricular approaches. Participation in a literacy programme has enhanced approaches to literacy development across the nursery.
- Staff provide a wide range of curricular experiences across most curricular areas. Children successfully access their extensive outdoor environment daily. Staff support children to extend learning from indoors to outdoors. For example, children recreate the story of the three little pigs, including building a house with hay and bricks for the wolf to blow down. Staff should continue to develop their approaches to curriculum design to ensure that children receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Staff effectively provide opportunities for children to engage in inquiry and exploration, which enables them to develop their problem-solving skills well. Children use water and mud to make cups of tea and mix potions. Staff respond effectively to children's interests outdoors and provide resources which promote creativity and learning for sustainability. Staff should

continue to plan progressively across all curricular areas to ensure all children receive challenge, breadth and depth in learning.

- Staff know the children, families and their unique local community context very well. As a result, they strive to deliver excellence and equity for all children. Staff support children effectively to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. For example, children confidently retell stories, answering questions and contributing well to discussions.
- Staff work well together to ensure positive transitions within the setting, for example, all children are supported very well to prepare for lunch. This results in a calm lunch experience for all children. Staff plan transitions to primary school in collaboration with primary colleagues. They share information on children's learning and development, which supports curriculum continuity and progression for all children. Staff should continue to develop approaches to transition, as planned.
- All staff know the community and context very well and develop meaningful partnerships with a range of local people, businesses and services. Children engage in Bookbug sessions in the local care home. This supports children to engage in inter-generational learning in a fun and imaginative way. Staff have developed a positive relationship with the local leisure centre staff. They support all children to access weekly planned sessions to develop their skills in physical exercise. As a result, children confidently run, climb, balance and jump using a range of physical apparatus.
- Staff value and respect the contributions of families to support children's learning. They engage in daily conversations, 'Bumps to School' and more formal opportunities to discuss individual children's learning. Staff invite parents to contribute effectively to the curriculum. For example, children learn about the festival 'Up-Helly-Aa' in a meaningful way. Children create shields and helmets and were joined by parents who dressed as Vikings to support their learning. This supports children to learn more about the world in which they live and grow and their local context.
- Staff provide a range of opportunities to support children's skills for life and learning. They explore the local community and contribute very well to local events. Children contributed to the local Yell Show and won first prize in two categories. Staff extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live and grow. Children explore world maps to research where specific animals come from. Children confidently ask questions of the people around them, including those visiting the nursery. Staff support children to use digital technologies to connect with the world beyond their immediate experience. Children built a railway bridge and used a tablet computer to explore different types of bridge. Staff should continue to provide digital technology experiences to enhance and extend children's learning.

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	

- Staff have developed very positive relationships with children, which support them to feel valued, safe and secure. Children have established kind and caring relationships with each other and have developed friendship groups with their peers. Children benefit from consistent routines and this supports their confidence and independence very well. For example, children choose a story, engage well in rhyme time and enjoy singing before lunch. Staff ensure children's wellbeing and developmental needs are met very well through carefully considered experiences and learning environments. They reflect daily on their practice and use audits effectively to enhance their provision. This ensures they continue to respond in a timely manner and effectively support children's learning and engagement.
- Almost all children are engaged and motivated in a wide range of learning experiences indoors, outdoors and in the local community. Children engage for sustained periods of time in their chosen experience. For example, building towers with the blocks and measuring themselves against the tower. Staff have created a learning environment, which is attractive and well-resourced, with a range of opened ended resources. They provide children opportunities to be to be creative, curious, active and engage enthusiastically in learning. For example, children explore the forest in the school grounds, carefully navigating the path and listening for sounds.
- Staff have a very good understanding of early learning pedagogy and continually update their knowledge and skills to support children's learning. They interact in a nurturing and caring manner, with most staff using commentary very well to support children's learning. For example, staff support children to explore the book of the week and take part in conversations

to deepen and extend their learning. All staff support children to engage well with each other, as they share, take turns and learn well together.

- Staff work well with parents as children start nursery to gather important information about children and their prior learning. They observe and document children's learning and achievements well in a range of ways. All children have attractive journals, which demonstrate their progress and engagement in a range of experiences. Staff have created a well-documented floorbook, which clearly evidences children's voice. They have developed an attractive achievement wall to enable all children and staff to celebrate success.
- Staff professional judgements, focus child observations and assessment information contribute to effectively identifying children's progress and future learning. Children confidently share their learning journal, describing previous learning in detail. Staff plan both responsively and intentionally to ensure a balance of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-directed experiences. Planning takes full account of the local context to ensure experiences are relevant to children and families. Moving forward, staff should continue to review and streamline their approaches to planning and tracking across the curriculum. This will support them to clearly identify any gaps in children's learning.
- Staff use a range of helpful approaches to monitor, record, evaluate and report on children's progress. They track coverage across curriculum for excellence experiences and outcomes and track effectively children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff use a health and wellbeing overview, early level Benchmarks, alongside developmental overviews to report on children's progress over time. Parents report that they value knowing the progress that their child is making and what they need to learn next. Staff should continue to work in partnership with parents to develop children's next steps, ensuring they are developmentally appropriate and relevant.

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 promote positive nurturing relationships, engagement and inclusion for all children and families. They model positive relationships as a team and show respect for each other in their daily practice. Staff are attuned to children’s needs and support children well to regulate their emotions. They support all children to share how they are feeling when they arrive each morning and should continue to embed this effective practice.
- Staff strive to get it right for all children and families through respectful and trusting relationships. They work effectively together to improve wellbeing outcomes for children and families. Staff embed the wellbeing indicators and support children to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included as part of daily routines and practice. Children are developing well the language of the wellbeing indicators. Children confidently share how they carry out daily risk assessments to ensure the outdoor environment is safe.
- All children are valued as unique individuals with their own views, needs and rights. Staff encourage children’s participation in a sensitive and developmentally appropriate way, taking full account of their age and stage of development. Staff support children to be snack helpers and children enjoy the opportunity to prepare and set up an inviting snack for their peers. Children experience a relaxed snack and lunch experience, engaging socially with adults and peers. Staff should continue to consider opportunities for children to be more independent at lunchtime.

- Staff have embedded inclusive practice across the nursery to ensure that all children are supported, encouraged and included. Children who may require additional support with learning are supported very well to engage in a way that works best for them. Almost all children participate well and engage in exploration and play for extended periods of time.
- Staff know all children well and ensure that planning and review processes take full account of their individual needs. They work effectively with families and partners to understand and meet the needs of all children. Staff value the input from specialist agencies to support all children to develop and learn. They identify children's individual learning needs through effective observations and early identification. Parents contribute well as they share important information when children start nursery to ensure staff take account of children's prior learning and needs.
- The headteacher and all staff adhere fully to legislative requirements and regularly refresh their knowledge and training. All children have detailed individual care plans, which are reviewed with parents and updated in line with best practice guidance. Staff share children's learning and progress very well with families and ensure all children continue to make very good progress in their learning and development.
- Staff value children and families and treat them with kindness, respect and fairness at all times. They promote inclusion and continue to embed children's rights in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate way. Staff know all children and parents very well and understand the socio-economic, cultural and linguistic context in which they live. Staff use this information very well to offer support in a sensitive manner when required. Staff celebrate a range of festivals and use resources well to promote diversity. Moving forward, staff should further promote diversity and continue to enhance children's awareness of the wider world in which they live and grow.

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.