

Summarised inspection findings

Tarradale Primary School Nursery Class

The Highland Council

24 March 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

Tarradale Primary School Nursery is part of Tarradale Primary School situated in the village of Muir of Ord. The nursery accommodation is in a separate building within the school grounds. It comprises of a reception area, cloakroom, three large playrooms, a spacious lunch canteen, toilet provision and an enclosed outdoor space. The nursery also has access to areas within the school such as the gym hall, general purpose room, library and outdoor play spaces.

The service is registered to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) for maximum of 58 children aged 2 years to those of an age to attend primary school. At the time of inspection there were 38 children registered to attend. There were no children aged two years registered. The majority of the children access their full ELC entitlement at Tarradale Primary School Nursery. A minority of children access a blended provision and take some of their ELC entitlement at Tarradale and some with other ELC providers. The service operates a term time provision and is open five days per week from 8.30 am until 3 pm each day.

The headteacher is the registered manager and she delegates the daily management of the nursery to the depute headteacher. The staffing team comprises of three full time and two part-time early years practitioners and two 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 developed the curriculum rationale in partnership with staff, parents and children. They have created a visual picture to capture all the elements that contribute to the curriculum. This includes Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), children's rights, wellbeing indicators, outdoor learning and national practice guidance. The visual curriculum rationale helps to support parents' understanding of the curriculum on offer at Tarradale Primary School Nursery. Staff should review the curriculum rationale regularly to reflect changing priorities, cohorts of children and changes in the community.

- The curriculum is firmly based in play. Planning is flexible and responsive to children's interests, and this supports staff to provide enjoyable and relevant learning experiences. Staff record coverage of CfE experiences and outcomes to support them to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff use a digital application to share planned learning with parents. Staff effectively build on what children already know to support continuity and progression in learning.
- Staff have developed meaningful links with other settings where children are accessing their ELC entitlement. They plan shared experiences to ease transitions between settings and to develop relationships to support transition to primary. Staff meet with the teachers at P1 to share information about individual children's learning as they move into school. Staff should continue to share information about learning to help to ensure transitions effectively build on prior learning.
- Staff know their community very well. They provide a range of events and opportunities for families to engage with children's learning. A few parents have visited the nursery to talk about the work they do. Staff should continue to encourage parental involvement in developing curricular experiences for children. Staff enhance children's learning experiences through using spaces within the school environment such as the gym hall, library and school grounds. They have made positive links with the local care home and children visit to perform songs for the residents at Christmas. Staff recognise there are spaces within the school grounds and the local community that could be used more frequently and more effectively. This has the potential to further enrich children's learning experiences. Staff should now embed approaches to enhance the curriculum. For example, they should continue developing meaningful relationships with carefully chosen community partners and developing further experiences to promote equality and diversity.
- Almost all children are developing skills for life and learning through opportunities for planning and preparing food for snack. They are learning about where food comes from as they grow vegetables in the nursery garden. They are learning about keeping safe as they undertake risk assessments in the outdoor area. Staff consult children about improvements to their nursery environment. This is supporting children to develop well their confidence in contributing their ideas and understanding that they can influence change. Staff should continue to support children's skills for life and learning. They should plan for, and provide, a broader range of real-life experiences including experiences to develop digital literacy.

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	

- Staff provide a warm and welcoming family ethos. There are clear and consistent routines in place that support almost all children to feel confident in the setting. Staff's focus on the shared school and nursery values supports children to be kind and respectful to others. As a result, almost all children are happy and settled and they play very well together, with or alongside other children. Staff should now help children to further develop their understanding of respect for the nursery environment.
- Staff have made recent changes to the environment, both indoors and outdoors, to promote children's curiosity and creativity well. This is allowing children freedom to explore and experiment in their play. Staff organise resources well to provide a wide range of rich engaging play experiences and children use the open-ended resources imaginatively in their play. There are stimulating resources to support literacy and numeracy development across all rooms. The relaxed pace of the day allows children to choose where they want to play. As a result, they sustain interest in their chosen activities for extended periods of time.
- Almost all staff engage fully with children in their play. They interact gently and sensitively with children, and this promotes a calm learning environment. Staff listen attentively to children, and this supports children to feel their ideas are valued. The quality of staff's interactions to encourage and extend children's thinking and to develop vocabulary is variable across the team. Senior leaders should develop ways to ensure there are consistent high-quality interactions to support learning.
- Staff involve children in planning learning through the use of floorbooks. They consult children to find out what children already know and what they would like to know next. Staff use this

information effectively to build on prior knowledge and to plan relevant and engaging learning experiences and outcomes for children. They should now use the floorbooks to support children to be aware of, and to talk about the skills they are developing as they engage in learning experiences.

- Staff very effectively record their observations of children's learning in their learning journals. Most observations help to capture effectively children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff should continue to build on this to record observations to show children's progress across all other curricular areas. Children are eager to share their learning journals with others and talk confidently about their learning.
- Staff are using new target sheets effectively to record children's next steps in learning and their progress in achieving them. Staff provide parents with links to helpful information that will enable them to support children at home to achieve their next steps in learning. A few children talk confidently about their targets and are proud of targets they had achieved. Staff should continue to embed this approach in their practice.
- Staff track children's learning using developmental trackers and CfE early level trackers. Staff meet termly with senior managers to discuss children's progress and to identify children who might experience barriers to learning. They use this information appropriately to access additional support from health partners. Staff should continue to ensure all tracking information reflects accurately where additional challenge or support in learning is needed for individual children. Staff now need to identify where changes to the learning experiences might be required to meet children's needs. As planned, senior leaders should work with the local authority to develop assessment and tracking approaches. This should help to provide robust information about children's progress in learning and health and wellbeing.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	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	

- Attendance within the nursery is registered but not tracked. The manager should now consider ways in which attendance can be tracked to support individual children and families, as required.
- Strong, positive and respectful relationships are evident between most staff, children, and their families. Staff provide a variety of opportunities for families to be involved in the life of the nursery, including stay and play, lunch times and cinema evenings. Staff are responsive to children's individual care needs. This helps children and families to feel respected, valued, and included. Staff are beginning to develop approaches to support children's emotional wellbeing, such as the use of visual pictures to help children to resolve conflicts. Staff should continue to develop approaches to support emotional wellbeing. They should consider targeted interventions for individual children who may require additional support, for example to develop regulation skills.
- Children's thoughts and ideas help to influence planning for learning and to evaluate and improve the nursery environment. Staff should continue to gather children's voices in ways that are inclusive for all children. This could include the increased use of visual materials, for example, to support understanding of concepts such as nurture and respect.
- Staff use the wellbeing indicators effectively to celebrate children's achievements from home and nursery, and record these within children's learning journals. Senior managers are at an early stage of tracking this information to ensure all children are included. Staff should

consider how the wellbeing indicators can be made relevant in age and stage appropriate ways, through play and learning experiences to further support children's understanding.

- Staff use 'Welcome Wednesdays', regular parent meetings and a digital communication application to effectively share learning, celebrate achievements and plan next steps with parents. Parents provide information about their child which informs their care plan, and these are reviewed termly. As a result, children's learning journals and care plans celebrate each child well as an individual. Staff should now explore ways to further involve children in setting their own learning targets, for example by identifying skills they would like to learn.
- Staff support transitions well throughout the nursery day. A relaxed start to the morning allows children time to settle. It provides opportunities for staff to meet with parents to share important information about their child. A few parents come into the nursery to assist their child's settling-in process. Staff should consider whether this approach could be offered more widely. Transitions to the lunch canteen are well supported, and mealtimes are mostly calm and sociable. Staff respond appropriately to children's needs, for example when children have finished their lunch or do not like what has been offered. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to develop their independence at lunchtime. This could include serving themselves part of their meal or taking on a lunch-time helper role.
- Children who are preparing to start school benefit from a range of opportunities that support their wellbeing. Staff work in partnership with local nurseries and the school to help children become familiar with new environments. As planned, staff should continue to develop transition arrangements for new children starting at the nursery.
- Staff work effectively in partnership with the local health visitor to plan for children's needs. This close partnership supports the early identification of additional needs and contributes positively to outcomes for children. Children celebrate a few festivals and celebrations through the nursery's work on children's rights. As identified, further opportunities should be provided for children to learn to challenge discrimination and about the diverse world in which they live.

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 Education Scotland 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.