

**HMIE**

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

Summarised inspection findings

St Pius X RC Primary School Nursery Class

Dundee City Council

15 September 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

St Pius X RC Primary School nursery classes are located within a modern purpose-built building in the grounds of the school. There are well established outdoor play areas. The nursery provides early learning and childcare for 10 two-year-old children and 28 children aged three years to those not yet attending school. The acting headteacher of the school has responsibility for the leadership of the nursery. Day to day management is led by a senior early years practitioner. Most of the children attending the nursery live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 and 2.

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 provide a curriculum which is built upon trusting and nurturing relationships. There is a focus on the values of ‘love, value, creativity’. Staff model these values in their daily practice. They provide a wide range of experiences across the curriculum to engage children in their play and learning. Children access extensive outdoor spaces within the nursery environment which enables them to engage in exploration and inquiry. They develop their balance and cycling skills well. Children explore planting seeds from a range of fruits they have enjoyed at snack to see what grows. As planned, staff should continue to review and develop a curriculum rationale. They need to identify the aim of the learning and how the curriculum is designed. As planned, the team should continue building their ‘champion’ roles as they develop a shared understanding of all areas of the curriculum.
- Staff take children to visit the local library to promote an interest in books. Staff engage with a few partners to enhance learning including in music. They should continue to develop opportunities for children to extend their learning in the local and wider community. Senior leaders should work with the team to plan across the curriculum, indoors and outdoors, ensuring all children receive breadth, depth, progression and challenge in their learning. This should include extending approaches to tracking to ensure play across the curriculum is monitored, evaluated and moderated.

- All staff manage transitions into and across the setting sensitively and flexibly to meet the individual needs of children and families. Staff work very well together across the playrooms to ensure children have a positive transition from one room to another. Parents talk positively about how quickly their children settle and enjoy nursery. Currently, there are limited links with the life of the primary school. Senior leaders should engage with staff to enhance further the transition to P1 and to support continuity for children in play and learning across early level.
- Staff engage well each day with parents and families at the beginning and close of sessions. Parents enjoy regular opportunities for shared play. This is supporting parents to understand better the learning their children experience. Staff capture children's learning through a range of processes. Moving forward, senior leaders should support staff to streamline approaches to sharing children's learning and achievements with parents and carers. Staff should ensure that children's significant learning and next steps are clear.
- Staff provide a range of experiences to support the development of children's skills for life and learning. Children are developing their confidence and independence skills well as they ask questions and make decisions as they play. They pour drinks and eat together at the table for snack and lunch. They enjoy taking turns to risk assess the outdoor area to ensure it is safe for play each morning. Senior leaders should support staff to ensure children have access to a range of digital tools and toys to enhance learning and skills development.

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 an inclusive ethos for children and families. Children benefit from sensitive, respectful relationships that support their confidence, security and a strong sense of belonging. Staff support children sensitively to manage their emotions and quickly help children to resolve any disagreements. Children play well together, with or alongside other children. Almost all children are happy and settled.
- Children aged two to three benefit from their separate indoor and outdoor spaces. The playroom and outdoor spaces are attractive and appropriately organised and resourced to meet their developmental needs. They like experimenting with paint and water, enjoying sensory experiences in their free play. Skilled staff support their learning and development demonstrating a sound understanding of schematic play underpinned by the national practice guidance. Children are encouraged to make choices and develop independence through play experiences and daily routines.
- Children aged three to five have freedom to access indoor and outdoor play areas throughout the day. The play spaces offer rich, open-ended experiences that promote curiosity, creativity and exploration. Most children are motivated and focus on their chosen activities for extended periods of time. They develop early communication and language skills purposefully through stories, songs and meaningful role play experiences. As planned, staff should now develop a strategic approach to embedding early numeracy skills across daily routines and play. They should ensure opportunities for a clearer progression in children's early mathematical understanding.
- Almost all children engage and play confidently in the high-quality learning spaces outdoors. Children are supported by skilled staff to explore and learn about the natural world, and they

are provided with opportunities to understand risk through exploring a wide range of resources. Children demonstrate cooperation in how well they work together with their friends. Most children make positive choices as they engage in a wide variety of activities within the outdoor environments.

- Staff and children's use of digital technologies across the nursery is limited. Staff should encourage children to make effective use of devices to support research of topics, develop their emerging interests, and access relevant information in the moment. Staff should extend the use of digital approaches in a planned way to further enhance children's engagement and development of skills.
- All staff interact positively with children through supportive and encouraging interactions. Most staff use effective questioning and model ambitious vocabulary to extend children's thinking and support language development. This contributes positively to children's curiosity and engagement. As planned, senior leaders should continue to support an increased focus on consistent use of effective questioning to support children's thinking and maximise learning opportunities.
- Staff support and encourage children to talk about their learning. They capture most children's views within the learning environment in floor books, on learning walls and within their individual learning journals. This helps them to reflect on their learning and take ownership of their ideas.
- All staff gather and record observations in a range of different ways and share them within floor books, learning journals and learning walls. There is variability in the quality of observations, and these do not yet consistently identify progress or next steps. Senior leaders should strengthen quality assurance processes of observations to ensure that they are purposeful, of consistently high quality, and are clearly linked to significant learning to inform planning.
- Staff's current approach to planning is responsive and informed by children's interests and views. Staff should now strengthen approaches to planning through more intentional planning to provide clearer links to early level experiences and outcomes. They should also ensure that identified learning from observations is consistently extended through meaningful next steps. These next steps should now have a clearer focus on significant learning and progression. Staff should continue to develop and embed a clear and consistent observation, assessment and planning cycle to ensure learning is planned, progressive and aligned with curriculum expectations.
- Staff track children's progress in learning across the curriculum using the local authority tracker tool. Strengthening the connection between observation, assessment, planning and tracking should support greater continuity and progression for children's learning.

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	

- Children experience positive and caring relationships across the setting. Parents feel welcome and note that all staff are approachable and supportive. Staff have developed a culture where the wellbeing of children and their families is central to the daily life of the nursery. They support families well to ensure children attend nursery regularly. All staff model the nursery values in their daily practice. This is helping children and their parents to understand expected behaviours as children learn and play together. Children thrive and develop in the caring environment where they play and learn together. Children are happy and have fun in their play.
- Staff have embedded a strong focus on getting it right for every child and the wellbeing indicators. The wellbeing ‘tentacles’ are evident and used across the nursery. Children and their families are developing the vocabulary of wellbeing. This is supporting a shared understanding of wellbeing, and discussions around children’s needs and development as they learn new skills and knowledge in their play. Staff support children well to describe their feelings and emotions. As a result, most children are learning to manage their emotions and play well together. Across the day children are active, particularly in their outdoor play and regular visits to the school gym. Staff use snack and lunchtimes to promote healthy eating and the development of social skills when eating together at the table.
- Staff know children and their families very well. They understand the challenges families may face in their daily lives. Staff listen to the views of children and their parents. All children are included in all aspects of nursery life. They benefit from and enjoy well-established daily routines and practices. Staff have developed a welcoming environment that offers children a

range of calm, creative and active opportunities. This supports them to participate in play both indoors and outdoors with confidence and enthusiasm.

- Nursery leaders are aware of legislative requirements for safeguarding and child protection. They regularly review policies and procedures ensuring staff are aware of how to keep children safe in line with local and national guidance. All children have individual care plans, which are reviewed with parents and updated in line with best practice guidance.
- Staff make very effective use of a range of universal approaches to support children's development of language and communication. This has a positive impact on all children. In both playrooms, all children benefit from and are included in planned learning to support their literacy and wellbeing development. Moving forward, staff should work together to improve targeted support for children who need additional support in their learning and development. Senior leaders should support the team to continue to develop confidence in using assessment information effectively to evaluate learning, gaps and plan next steps and interventions.
- Nursery leaders and staff treat all children and parents with kindness, respect and fairness. They provide inclusive and compassionate support for families including easy access to a food bank, including household items and pre-loved clothing. This contributes well to equity and inclusion within the community.
- Staff increasingly offer meaningful opportunities to support children to learn more about different cultures and lifestyles. As they develop their curriculum rationale, they should continue to develop further approaches to support diversity and enrich children's experiences.

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.