

Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

Rosewell Primary School Nursery

Midlothian Council
3 February 2026

In December 2025, a team of inspectors from HMIE and the Care Inspectorate visited Rosewell Primary School Nursery. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the head of setting and staff.

Key inspection findings

- Staff skills, knowledge and values were positively enhancing outcomes for children through strong, reflective practice and a committed and compassionate staff team.
- Staff have high-quality interactions with children. They use effective questioning techniques to support meaningful learning.
- Staff are kind, warm and nurturing to all children. They have developed positive relationships with children and their families.
- Effective personal planning contained meaningful information and strategies of support. These were regularly reviewed which promoted positive outcomes for children.
- The service should work towards making improvements around personal care and changing facilities to ensure children's privacy and dignity is upheld and to reduce the risk of infection.

HM Inspectors and the Care Inspectorate gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the setting's work using four quality indicators from the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors.

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	very good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Nurturing, care and support	good

Children's progress	good
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Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual information

Rosewell Primary School Nursery is situated within Rosewell Primary School in Midlothian. There is one large playroom and access to the outdoors. The nursery is registered for 44 children at one time. There are currently 35 children on the roll. Children can access 1140 hours of early education and childcare from age three to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery is open from 8.30am to 3.00pm on Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30am to 12.30pm on Fridays, during term time.

The headteacher is the registered manager of the nursery. The principal teacher has strategic responsibility for the nursery. There is one senior early years practitioner and four early years practitioners.

Leadership: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of how children develop and learn. They were skilled in interactions with children and knew them well which supported learning across a broad range of areas. Staff asked effective questions to help children think critically and solve problems during water play activities, weather exploration, and construction.

Staff used research and best practice to enhance children's outcomes. For example, emergent literacy development was prioritised and skilfully supported throughout the nursery. Staff drew on their training to promote children's learning through approaches such as songs, rhymes, visual supports, and interactive storytelling. Inclusive strategies, such as Sign Along, reflected a rights-based approach to learning for all children. To build on this, staff could further develop professional learning across the whole team to embed signing routinely in play and strengthen this practice even more.

Learning and development opportunities for staff have been wide-ranging and had a clear impact. Team discussions and reflection happened naturally as well as during formal meetings. Staff were able to explain changes they had made as a result of training, such as understanding the intergenerational impact of trauma, using sign-along, and promoting Froebelian principles. Leadership regularly signposted relevant training linked to improvement priorities or staff interests. Records of

training were kept and plans to introduce new documentation with space to record impact will strengthen this process further. This allowed children to benefit from a high-quality staff team who were committed to professional development.

Performance review and development processes were used effectively to support staff in achieving goals linked to their leadership roles. Targets and development needs were clearly identified, and interim reviews ensured ongoing reflection. Some plans included sharing learning across the team, such as forest training and creativity outdoors. The impact of this was evident in the high-quality outdoor spaces, rich learning experiences, and positive interactions available to children.

Development priorities had evolved but remained focused on improving children's achievement and outcomes. Examples included the Big Bedtime Read initiative, which received positive parental feedback, and ongoing literacy development to strengthen children's emergent communication skills. Funding had also been allocated for additional Forest training to increase staff expertise. This will increase opportunities for children to develop confidence, independence and curiosity through rich outdoor experiences.

The team demonstrated strong bonds and deep respect for one another, presenting as reflective, professional, and supportive. While rotas and responsibilities were clearly defined, staff remained flexible and responsive to each other's and children's needs. This culture of openness and collaboration was driving improvement and promoting positive outcomes for children.

Effective use was made of the diverse skills, experience, and interests of the team to enhance children's care, support, and learning. Staff communicated well to manage transitions. Newer staff reported feeling well supported, and time was allocated in meetings for sharing learning, evaluating the improvement plan, and planning next steps. Arrangements for staff absence were in place and worked effectively. Families and children were informed of any changes to key worker groups, minimising disruption to routines.

Overall, staff skills, knowledge, values, and deployment were highly effective and contributed significantly to positive outcomes for children.

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

Senior leaders and staff understand fully the importance of building strong relationships with children. They are caring and respectful and this makes children feel included and valued. Staff have developed a clear, predictable structure for the nursery day and children benefit fully from knowing what is happening next. Children have their voices listened to across the nursery environment to influence choices and decisions about their learning. Staff consider carefully transitions for all children and

offer support to those who need it. Most children engage well indoors and outdoors. They participate in a wide range of experiences and stay highly engaged in their play. Children benefit from stories, rhymes and songs throughout the day. Children engage well in learning French, Scots and using signs to communicate. As planned, staff should continue to plan real-life experiences for children to widen their opportunities and develop their skills.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of early level pedagogy. They are highly skilled in their interactions and use well-considered questions. This supports children to make progress in their learning. Staff listen to children and are responsive to their needs. They have created a purposeful learning environment and support children to understand expectations. Staff should continue to support all children to respect their environment and look after their space. For example, ensuring coats and wellies are put away to avoid trip hazards. Staff make good use of digital technology to enhance children's learning. They support children well to take photographs and create movies. Children reflect well on their learning using digital floorbooks. Staff focus on developing children's digital skills in a developmentally appropriate way to support their learning.

Staff plan intentionally and responsively to meet the needs and interests of children. Most children engage well in planned and focussed group times. Children decide if they want to join and have the flexibility to make their own choices. Most children benefit from learning in a range of contexts which meet their interests. Staff gather a range of information about children and build on this through observations. For example, children have been interested in space and staff have planned associated learning activities which meet the needs of all children well. Staff record observations on an online learning journal and share these well with parents. They detail children's experiences of learning during indoor and outdoor play, and when they participate in 'Forest Friday.' Staff should now focus on recording significant learning for individual children in these observations to demonstrate the progress children are making. They should add children's next steps and ensure they share these with children and their families.

Staff use progression pathways effectively to track individual children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They track children's progress well in understanding the wellbeing indicators. Staff work well with partners and take their views into account when identifying appropriate strategies. They use visuals and signs well and adapt their language to meet children's learning needs effectively. For example, they use simple, clear words to support children with English as an additional language and children who require additional support with their learning. Staff are keen to develop their own skills to meet all children's needs. They should now develop their tracking system and regularly update the information they have gathered about children's learning to inform future planning. This should help to ensure there is both support and challenge for all children when they need it.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Relationships across the team were warm and nurturing and children consistently experienced responsive care that promoted their wellbeing. Staff were attentive and sensitive to children's needs, offering comfort and reassurance when required. They demonstrated empathy and validated their feelings which meant children felt safe and valued.

Staff used strategies effectively to support emotional regulation. Visual tools, such as sign-in pots enabled staff to check in with children and respond promptly to their emotions. Interactions were positive and purposeful, with staff encouraging cooperation and kindness through phrases such as "let's work together." Song signifiers were embedded and used consistently to support transitions, helping children feel safe and calm throughout the day.

Engagement was generally high during more structured experiences, including singing, rhymes, and sensory play. Smaller group sessions worked well, promoting turn-taking and interaction. Some children were less engaged in these experiences. Moving forwards, staff should continue to reflect on the purpose and number of group time sessions to ensure children's ability to lead their own learning is not overly interrupted. Transitions were well managed, but staff should continue to reflect on the purpose and structure of these. This would ensure all children benefitted from making their own choices, promote their independence, and minimise disruptions to routines across the day.

Snack and mealtimes were calm and sociable, with children having opportunities to prepare food, set tables, and tidy up. Handwashing routines were in place before lunch but could be more robust by ensuring this is also carried out after lunch and after outdoor play. Individual dietary needs were managed well, with staff working closely with families to support children's health and emotional wellbeing.

Personal plans were detailed, promoting children's rights, individuality, and interests. They were kept up to date through regular reviews and included clear notes and strategies to meet identified needs. Moving forward, consistently recording evaluations of next steps or strategies of support would enable staff to track progress more effectively and help to clarify which interventions were most effective. Staff should also ensure families sign during reviews as well as date them. Plans were actively used in practice, with staff able to describe strategies and their impact. For example, the use of visuals and calming songs or responsibility tasks to build confidence. This meant children received support and care that was right for them.

Wellbeing was enhanced through tracking and monitoring against national wellbeing indicators (Scottish Government, 2007). This enabled staff to adapt their practice and gave them knowledge on specific areas to work with children to improve outcomes.

Families spoke positively about the setting, describing staff as warm, welcoming, and knowledgeable. Parents and carers valued the flexible stay-and-play opportunities and felt well informed about their child's learning. One parent commented that their child had "blossomed in confidence and independence," while another praised the smooth transitions and respectful approach during settling-in.

Children were safe and secure, with clear child protection procedures understood by staff. Risk assessments were in place, though simplifying documentation and ensuring regular review dates would strengthen this process. To ensure children's privacy and dignity is always protected, and to reduce the risk of infection, the service should improve arrangements for personal care (see area for improvement 1).

Overall, staff provided nurturing care and support that promoted children's wellbeing and was promoting positive outcomes for children.

Areas for improvement –

1. To ensure the privacy and dignity of children, reduce the risk of infection and to ensure the overall health and wellbeing of staff, the provider should make improvements around changing areas for personal care.

This should include, but not be limited to, ensuring that areas for personal care meet best practice guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'If I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected' (HSCS 1.4); and 'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed (HSCS 5.4).

This is to ensure provision is consistent with the Scottish Government and Care inspectorate document, Space to grow and thrive: Design guidance for early learning and childcare and school age childcare settings

Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Most children are making good progress in their learning. Staff record children's progress using progression pathways on an online system. Staff identify effectively when children have achieved an area of the curriculum at early level and when they are working towards it. Senior leaders should now track all other areas of the curriculum to ensure children have opportunities to develop further their learning and skills.

Most children engage well in nursery rhymes and songs. They are engaged when listening to stories and are beginning to re-tell stories and predict what happens next. Most children engage well in the writing area. They mark make on Christmas cards and use their fine motor skills well to use scissors to make their own Christmas decorations. Most children engage in rich experiences to develop their curiosity and creativity, particularly in the well-developed outdoor space. For example, children engage well in the mud kitchen with natural resources and use crates and pallets to create their own obstacle courses. Most children benefit from a wide variety of numeracy experiences indoors and outdoors to develop their learning, such as opportunities for counting, measuring and weighing. Staff support children well with their wellbeing using effective systems and strategies. Most children understand how to check-in emotionally at the start of the day. They understand which strategies to use to help them when they do not feel at their best. Most children are beginning to understand how to keep themselves safe and how to manage risks safely, such as in the construction area where they are building high structures. Children have developed their own nursery charter about keeping safe and being happy at nursery.

Staff should now develop their system further, with next steps to support children to continue to make better progress. Staff should use their observations and work with children and their families to establish these. Staff need to ensure they identify when next steps are achieved. This should support staff to understand when children need further support or challenge. A few children would benefit from further challenge to extend their learning. For example, they would benefit from opportunities and experiences to develop their writing skills further.

Staff praise children's individual successes routinely. They involve families by asking for successes and achievements from home. For example, a few children have been involved in sporting activities and received a medal for their involvement. These successes are shared in nursery and within the school newsletter to celebrate the achievement. Senior leaders and staff should now explore further ways to enhance how they celebrate success. For example, when a child has achieved a next step in their learning. This should support children better to feel proud of their achievements. Senior leaders and staff should track children's achievements to ensure all children benefit from a wide variety of experiences.

Senior leaders and staff know children and families well. They understand the socio-economic and cultural barriers that families face. Staff offer sensitive support and advice to ensure children are well supported. For example, they offer support to apply for funds, grants and Christmas presents. They also provide resources to families to encourage learning at home, which increases parental engagement and involvement. They work effectively with partners to secure improved outcomes for children.

Safeguarding (HMIE)

- Inspectors discussed safeguarding and child protection information provided by the ELC setting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the ELC setting and the education authority.

Outcome of inspection

We are confident that the ELC setting has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

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