

Summarised inspection findings

Murthly Primary School Nursery

Perth and Kinross Council

31 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

Murthly Primary School Nursery is situated outside the village of Murthly, approximately ten miles north of Perth. The nursery consists of a large playroom and extensive outdoor space. The nursery is registered to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC) for 24 children, aged from two to those not yet attending school. Currently, staffing allows for 16 children to attend at any time. There are 20 children on the roll, and the minority attend five days. The headteacher is responsible for the nursery and staffing comprises two full-time practitioners and a part-time play assistant. The team are supported weekly by a visiting early years support teacher and a family learning practitioner. The staff team are well established.

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 that is underpinned by whole school values, nurturing relationships, and the promotion of children's rights. They plan carefully so that children's interests and motivations are key features of curriculum design. This helps children to direct and lead their own learning. Staff make effective use of local and national guidance to inform the curriculum they offer. As a result, children experience a broad and balanced curriculum that is accessible and appropriately challenging to all. The headteacher and staff confidently articulate the rationale and purpose of the curriculum, including the importance of creativity and curiosity. They should now progress their plans to document this to ensure that the curriculum rationale is co-designed, shared and understood by children, parents and partners.
- Staff, working with the headteacher, continue to develop the quality of curriculum design through carefully targeted improvement priorities. Currently, staff are developing aspects of literacy and improving opportunities for high quality science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). As a result, staff are exploring national guidance in depth and are supporting children to experience a broader range of learning. This ongoing development is helping to ensure the curriculum is responsive to the needs of children.

- Recently, staff have identified aspects of curriculum areas where children are not making expected progress, such as children's awareness of money in mathematics. They now provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about money. Staff carefully measure related impact on children's learning. Staff should build on this approach, using local authority progression pathways, to plan intentionally for progressive learning across more curriculum areas.
- Staff work collaboratively with families, to support children as they move into nursery, between different nurseries across the week and onto school. The early years support teacher provides a helpful and consistent link supporting children who attend different settings. Staff provide a weekly group for younger children, 'Murthly Minis'. This provides exciting opportunities for children from the community to visit the nursery and benefit from a range of experiences. As a result, children become familiar with nursery spaces and begin to form positive relationships with staff before starting nursery. For a number of children attending, this group has a significantly positive impact on supporting seamless transitions into nursery and promotes continuity in learning.
- Staff recognise the importance of, and are successful in, developing sustained partnerships that enrich the curriculum. Examples include the involvement of a local beekeeper to help children learn about bees and the use of the library van to support reading. The early years family learning practitioner provides increased opportunities for family learning. Staff should continue to seek and develop carefully chosen partnerships that enrich the curriculum.
- Parents feel empowered to contribute to the curriculum and share in their child's ELC experience. Staff recently consulted with families to explore what areas they would like to be involved in and have created an engagement plan that they have begun to implement. Parents have already benefitted from an evening on how to promote reading at home, explored STEM resources and bicycle care. Staff invite all parents to contribute as equal partners in children's learning journals and to share their hobbies and occupations as part of the curriculum.
- Children benefit from a wide range of experiences to develop skills for life and learning. They have increasing access to digital technologies and are developing a range of skills well, such as simple coding. Staff should continue to support children to develop digital skills to enable exploration and connection with the world beyond their immediate experience. Children enjoy preparing foods for snack and adopting the role of 'Tiny Teacher' as they share their expertise and personal experiences with others. This contributes to the development of self-confidence.

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 children are happy and settled and enjoy their nursery experiences. Staff support children with very calm, caring and nurturing approaches. They have worked very effectively to create a welcoming, purposeful and high-quality learning environment. Staff carefully consider the flow of the day to minimise transitions and maximise meaningful learning opportunities. Almost all children follow well established routines independently. All children are enthusiastic and motivated to learn. They engage well with a range of high-quality learning experiences and resources both indoors and out. Staff regularly review resources and learning experiences in response to children's interests and next steps. As a result, children's natural curiosity and creativity is enabled.

■ Highly skilled staff have a very good understanding of their individual context, developed over many years, and know children and families very well. The school values and children's rights are exemplified in all interactions. Staff are reflective in their practice and have a shared understanding of pedagogy which they use well to support children's learning. They observe children as they play and interact sensitively with them using effective questions and comments purposefully to support, develop and extend learning. Almost all children play well independently learning, applying and consolidating skills. They interact positively with each other and as a result, have formed supportive friendships. Almost all children share their views confidently and know their contributions are valued. They access a range of digital resources. For example, an interactive whiteboard, robots and recordable devices. As planned, staff should continue to develop how digital technology is used to ensure clear progression of children's skills.

- Staff work very well together to plan high-quality learning experiences for children. They have created a planning system which takes account of the need for responsive and intentional planning and incorporates children's rights and school values. This approach ensures an effective balance between child-led, adult-initiated and adult-directed learning. Working with children, staff also document planning in floorbooks. Children make effective contributions to these through drawings, writing and staff capturing their thoughts. This approach is responsive and clearly demonstrates how staff support children's needs and evolving interests.
- Staff use information gathered through planning and well-timed observations to gather holistic assessment information about children's learning and next steps. Staff celebrate children's progress through carpet time, attractive displays and share information with parents via online journals. Parents are encouraged to interact with, and contribute to journals, such as, sharing learning from home. Staff regularly celebrate children's wider achievements. Staff link these achievements to school values. Staff should now begin to consider how they can track the skills children learn through these valuable experiences.
- All children have individual learning targets, and most are able to talk about what they are learning and developing. They enjoy exploring their learning journal and talk confidently about previous experiences. Staff use children's next steps effectively to track and monitor progression of key skills in aspects of development and benchmarks in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They also use a local authority tracking tool at points across the year to track key milestones. Staff are at the early stages of using Curriculum for Excellence national Benchmarks to track breadth of coverage and children's progress across the curriculum beyond literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They are ready, and enthusiastic, to explore and develop this further.

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 place high importance on wellbeing, and this is underpinned by trusting, nurturing and consistent relationships with children, families and each other. These relationships are a key feature of the ethos and enabling environment that welcomes and values everyone equally. Staff are attuned to the varying needs of children, as individuals, and over the day. They support all children calmly, sensitively and consistently to understand and manage their emotions. Staff have developed the environment carefully to ensure there are appropriate calming spaces for children to rest, be alone and quiet, both indoors and out. Almost all children are developing vocabulary to express themselves and mirror the calm approaches modelled by staff. As a result, children demonstrate the whole school values in developmentally appropriate ways with minimal conflicts as they learn and play together.
- Staff are sensitive to the wishes and needs of families as they support children's attendance at nursery. They promote the value of early learning and childcare and are respectful of parental decisions for children to attend part-time.
- Children's individual needs are central to the support offered by staff who strive to improve outcomes for children and families. All children have learning targets, created in partnership with them and their families. Staff ensure targets reflect children's development needs and build on what they already know and can do. These targets help children experience learning that is appropriate and motivating to them. All children play an active role in the life of the setting and staff ensure that children have many opportunities to influence their experiences. Recently, children have been involved in choosing new resources and are regularly involved in directing their learning. Staff use a range of approaches to provide support for all. This

includes a tailored programme to develop vocabulary to better meet the needs of children. This is impacting positively on the range of new, more complex words children use to express themselves.

- Working collaboratively with parents, staff readily identify where children may have barriers to their learning. They make very effective use of their observations and understanding of child development to identify the needs of individuals. Where appropriate, they use planned interventions to both support and challenge children's learning. This includes individual supports and at times, small, focused group times. Staff, including the early years support teacher, carefully assess the difference these interventions make to ensure accelerated children's progress.
- The headteacher and staff adhere fully to legislative requirements and continually deepen their professional knowledge and understanding. They ensure that professional learning supports them to provide improved support to children and their families.
- Staff exemplify the whole school values successfully in their practice. Within the respectful and inclusive ethos, staff ensure everyone is treated with kindness and fairness and encourage these qualities in children. They have a respectful understanding of the socio-economic, cultural and linguistic context in which children and families live. Staff respond sensitively to individual needs of children. They pay close attention to ensure that children who may face additional challenges are supported to make improved progress.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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.