

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Education
to Cabinet
of 28th April 2026**

**Subject: Inspection of Dundonald Primary School and Early Years
Centre: Education Scotland Report**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of the Education Scotland Inspection of Dundonald Primary School and Early Years Centre.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet
- 2.1.1 Consider the contents of the National report by Education Scotland as contained in Appendix 1 and appendix 2; and
 - 2.1.2 Agrees that the main points for action will be addressed by the Head Teacher and Quality Improvement Manager

3. Background

- 3.1 Education Scotland inspectors inspected Dundonald Primary School and Early Years Centre in November 2025 and looked at aspects of the school and Early Years Centre's recent work. This was a short model inspection in the school evaluating learning, teaching and assessment and raising attainment and achievement. In the Early Years Centre the team consisted of Education Scotland Inspectors and also inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. The joint team evaluated staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment, Learning, teaching and assessment, nurturing, care and support and children's progress.
- 3.2 The report for Dundonald PS and EYC was published on 20th January 2026.
- 3.3 Education Scotland Inspectors found the following key strengths in the school:
- Children are very articulate and are highly respectful of each other and staff. They engage well in learning in school and the community and are confident and motivated to do their best.
 - The headteacher and depute headteacher support all staff very well to provide consistently high-quality learning and teaching. All staff create attractive learning

environments which support and include all children to engage fully in their learning.

- All staff use highly-effective approaches to raise attainment for all children. As a result, children make very good progress as they move through the school.

3.4 Education Scotland Inspectors agreed the following areas for development with the leadership team of the school and educational services:

- All staff should continue to ensure that all children receive learning which provides appropriate challenge.
- All staff should develop further approaches to help children understand the skills they are learning which will support them in life, learning and work.

3.5 Education Scotland Inspectors and the Care Inspectorate reported the following key findings in the Early Years Centre;

- Children who are happy, engaged and making very good progress in their learning. This is very well supported by how senior leaders and staff use information about children's learning. They identify effectively when children may benefit from additional support or challenge in their learning and ensure this is in place.
- Skilled staff who provide high quality learning experiences for children in a calm and supportive learning environment. As a team, they have high standards and strive to do their best for children. They should now develop further the use of digital technologies to support children to develop skills and new understanding.
- Reflective teamwork strengthened relationships and promoted positive outcomes for children and families.
- Staff provided responsive care that promoted children's wellbeing, confidence, and emotional security.

4. Detail

4.1 It is proposed that Cabinet notes the key strengths and points for action in the Education Scotland report and agrees to the Head Teacher addressing these in conjunction with the Quality Improvement manager.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 Educational Services may be downgraded as part of the Shared Risk Assessment process carried out by the Local Area Network responsible for scrutiny if the service does not address the main points for action.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

9.1 The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority Two of the Council Plan: Live, work, Learn and Outcome one: Education and lifelong learning.

13. Link to Shaping our Future council No

14 Results of Consultation

14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report

15. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

15.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of Education will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the

Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Meetings to be arranged with the Head Teacher to monitor progress towards areas for development in conjunction with the planned programme of visits.	October 2026	Jacqueline Blair – Quality Improvement Manager

Background Papers

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Appendix 1



Dundonald PS -
Primary SIF - Final fo

Appendix 2



Dundonald EYC -
ELC Shared - Final fo



HMIE

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

Summarised inspection findings

Dundonald Primary School

South Ayrshire Council

20 January 2026



Key contextual information

Dundonald Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated in the village of Dundonald, South Ayrshire. It serves Dundonald and the surrounding rural area. Dundonald Early Years Class is situated within the main school building. The headteacher has been in post since 2018. She is supported by a depute headteacher.

The school roll is 145 children arranged across seven classes. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 5 with the remainder living in SIMD 4 and 6. There are 39% of children who require additional support with their learning and 28% of children who are entitled to free school meals. There are no children who have English as an additional language.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- All children enjoy learning in a very calm, nurturing and caring environment. All staff know children and families very well and foster positive, respectful relationships with children. Senior leaders and staff have created a positive culture for learning. Children know staff listen to them carefully, and act upon their views promptly. All staff and children ensure the recently reviewed values of respect, perseverance and kindness underpin the work and ethos of the school. As a result, almost all children display positive behaviour. They are confident, respectful, polite and supportive of each other's learning. Almost all children are highly-motivated and enthusiastic learners.
- Staff and children have achieved gold level accreditation for their work around children's rights. Senior leaders and staff work very well to support all children to identify and understand their rights. This is evident during class lessons, whole school assemblies and in visual displays in and around the school. All children contribute to the creation of class charters reflecting their rights. As a result, almost all children work and interact respectfully and patiently with one another and engage very well cooperatively within their learning and play.
- Across the school, all children benefit from attractive learning environments which are well organised and resourced. In almost all lessons, teachers communicate very clearly with children and provide helpful explanations and instructions. They explain and display the purpose of lessons effectively and consistently, reinforcing key learning points throughout. All teachers



should now continue to involve children in co-creating outcomes for their learning more regularly. This should help all children fully understand what success looks like.

- Senior leaders and staff worked together effectively to develop a consistent approach to high-quality learning and teaching across the school. This resulted in the school 'What a Good One Looks Like' framework. Senior leaders and teachers use this framework very well to help them to provide consistently high-quality learning and teaching across the school. In almost all lessons, teachers use questioning well to support children's understanding of key learning concepts. Teachers use skilled questioning well at times to enhance and extend further children's understanding of their learning. As planned, all staff should continue to develop their questioning strategies further to help children to develop their higher-order thinking skills.
- Across the school, children are enthusiastic learners and work extremely well together in pairs and in groups. In all lessons, children enjoy learning. A few children would benefit from increased levels of challenge. This should help to ensure that all children continue to make the best possible progress.
- Across the school, children develop skills very well in setting and evaluating targets for literacy and numeracy. Almost all children say that staff help them understand the progress they are making in their learning. Teachers support children very successfully to review their progress through oral and written feedback. All children peer and self-assess their work effectively. As a result, almost all children are increasing confidence in talking about the progress they are making and how they can improve their work.
- Children benefit from developing their skills in using digital technologies progressively across the school. Across all classes, children use laptops and digital tablets regularly to support learning. A few children are supported very effectively through the use of assistive technologies in line with their staged intervention plans. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards in lessons to provide instructions, demonstrate teaching concepts and provide video links to enhance lessons. Increasingly, children use a range of digital tools to support and enhance their learning very successfully. For example, P7 children are developing coding skills very well through the use of a range of programmable toys. Children at the upper stages have recently demonstrated very effectively their transferrable skills in using digital tools to enhance learning into different curriculum areas. For example, they coded and used programmable devices to measure and compare light as part of a sustainability project.
- Teachers at the early stages plan play-based approaches to learning very well. They incorporate a useful balance of adult-led, adult-initiated, and child-initiated experiences. This is supporting children well to make purposeful choices and take increased responsibility for their learning. Teachers are developing their skills in observation to identify next steps and respond to individual needs. As planned, staff should continue to build on this approach by extending play pedagogy in a progressive way, as children journey through the school. They should continue to engage with national practice guidance. This should help to ensure that all opportunities for child-led play are developmentally appropriate.



- All teachers use a range of assessments effectively to evaluate accurately children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They use formative and summative assessments successfully to help them understand children's learning needs. All teachers use national Benchmarks for literacy and numeracy to help them assess and determine children's progress very well. All teachers engaged fully in professional learning in teaching writing and have developed a well-judged writing pedagogy across the school. This is helping to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the delivery and assessment of writing across the school. As a next step, teachers should develop further their approaches to tracking pupil progress across all areas of the curriculum. This information should help them plan better the opportunities for children to apply their skills into different contexts. Children should develop a deeper understanding of how transferrable skills link to future skills for learning, life and work.

- Teachers and school assistants support children who require additional support with their learning very well. This includes support within and during lessons and through the provision of individual and small group learning activities. All staff collaborate effectively to help identify and meet the needs of children who require support. This is helping to upskill all staff in inclusive practice. As a result, all staff are improving and enhancing universal classroom supports. This is leading to all children benefiting from a highly-inclusive environment for learning.

- Senior leaders meet with teachers regularly to discuss children's progress. Together, they accurately identify children who are not making expected progress and agree interventions to support learning. Teachers evaluate the impact of interventions for individual learners and refresh support as required. Teachers use local authority progression pathways well to plan children's learning across all curricular areas. Almost all children have a voice in planning their learning linked to topics which increases their motivation to learn.

- Across the school, all staff demonstrate a strong commitment to collegiality and teamwork. Staff share ideas and successful practice regularly with each other. Teachers take part in regular, planned moderation activities, both within the school and with colleagues from schools within the catchment for the associated secondary school. This includes colleagues from the secondary school. As a result, teachers have a shared understanding of national standards in literacy and numeracy.



2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

**3.2 Raising attainment and achievement****very good**

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. The majority of children in P1 achieve Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early level in reading and writing. Most children in P4 and P7 achieve the expected CfE level in reading and writing. Across the school, almost all children achieve the expected CfE level in listening and talking. Most children in P7, and almost all children in P1 and P4, achieve the expected CfE level in numeracy and mathematics.
- Almost all children who require additional support for learning make very good progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make very good progress in literacy from prior levels of attainment.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children take turns well when listening and talking in small groups and use eye contact effectively. At first level, almost all children contribute well to class and group discussions. They explain and use techniques such as expression and eye contact well to engage peers and adults in conversation. At second level, almost all children express their views successfully in small group discussion and whole class debates. They explain key features of successful debating well, such as the use of persuasive vocabulary and retelling of facts to support their opinion.

Reading

- Most children at early level read from left to right and use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read new or unknown words. They answer questions confidently to explain their thoughts and feelings about stories. They need to develop their confidence in reading words without sounding. At first level, most children identify their favourite authors and books. At first level, children answer a range of literal, inferential and evaluative questions well about their chosen text. They now need to develop their use of expression as they read aloud. Most children at second level identify a range of techniques authors use to engage their reader. For example, they identify the use of rhetorical questioning, persuasive or emotive language.



Writing

- At early level, the majority of children are beginning to form recognisable letters. A few children are beginning to sound simple words to help them to write the word. Almost all children at early level, narrate a simple sentence about their experiences or feelings and a few are attempting to write the sentence. They should continue to work on the formation of all letters. At first level, most children use a range of ambitious vocabulary in their writing. They use their knowledge of spelling patterns to help them spell unfamiliar words and create a range of texts such as poems and persuasive texts. Most children at second level, present their opinions well in persuasive scripts for debates. They use ambitious vocabulary and organise their writing well in a range of genres. Most children at second level describe similes, metaphors and alliteration well. They recognise they could make more effective use of these writing features to enhance their daily writing. At first level and second levels, most children use very good handwriting and presentation in their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics from prior levels of attainment.
- At early level, almost all children count forwards and backwards within 30. They are developing confidence in their mental calculation skills and can write numbers 'before' and 'after'. Children should continue to explore coins through play to better identify their value. Almost all children at first level have a sound understanding of place value. They carry out three-digit addition and subtraction calculations and solve money problems accurately. Children are less confident at telling the time using digital and analogue clocks. At second level, most children explain the link between a digit, its place and its value well. Most children show their working accurately for calculations, including addition, division, subtraction and multiplication and confidently share their thinking processes with others. They would benefit from further exploration of fractions, decimals and percentages and also strategies to solve mathematical word problems.

Shape position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise and sort common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects according to simple criteria. They are developing their mathematical vocabulary to describe 2D shapes. Most children at first level describe 3D objects using mathematical language including face, edge and vertex. Almost all children successfully identify the four compass points and perform functions involving 90 degree turns. At second level, most children use mathematical language with increasing confidence to classify a range of angles identified within shapes and the environment.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children sort items confidently by colour, shape and size. They record information accurately using pictograms and bar graphs. At first level, most children use tally marks appropriately and know the key features of bar graphs, extracting key information. They should continue to develop skills in collating and presenting data from real-life contexts. Most children working at second level accurately analyse and interpret data from bar charts and line graphs. They should continue to develop further their



information handling skills through using digital technology more frequently to support their learning.

Attainment over time

- Staff are making very good progress in raising attainment for children over time. As children progress through the school, attainment over time for most cohorts is increasing. Senior leaders and staff track children's progress and attainment effectively in literacy and numeracy over time. They use information gathered well to identify gaps in children's learning and provide high quality targeted support. This is having a positive impact on children's progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Children's attendance is above the national average and has been so for the last five years. Senior leaders monitor children's attendance rigorously. They identify successfully children whose attendance is decreasing or below 90%. Senior leaders contact families and provide sensitive support to help them improve their child's attendance at school. Partner agencies, such as social work and health colleagues, provide valuable support to a few families whose children have increased levels of absence. This is helping these families to improve their child's attendance at school. There is an increasing trend for families to take term-time holidays. This is having a negative impact on the attendance of a few children. Senior leaders notify parents that term-time holiday absence is unauthorised and try to discourage such absence.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) very well to provide effective support where required to improve the attendance of specific cohorts of children. As a result, the attendance of children facing financial hardship or who require additional support in learning is improving. A few children have a part-time timetable which is linked to their child's plan. Senior leaders review and refresh these timetables and plans as per national guidance with a view to getting children back in school full-time. There have been no exclusions in the last five years.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff and children celebrate children's achievement from home very well using the achievement wall and in assemblies. Teachers celebrate children's effort in class work and achievements linked with the school values of perseverance, respect and kindness. They do so effectively through class certificates, spotlight students and the 'Dundonald achievement award'. Children are proud of the accreditations and trophies achieved by the whole school and teams. These achievements include football trophies and accreditation for the school's work in developing children's reading skills.
- All children have opportunities to attend lunchtime and after-school clubs. Teachers track children's participation carefully in these clubs. They identify areas of children's interest and provide clubs successfully which meet these interests well. For example, they provide a popular hairdressing club and chess club. A few older children expressed an interest in a specific board games club. Senior leaders have supported them to gather resources, and they are about to launch their own child-led club. Almost all children are developing their skills of communication and collaboration as they engage with their peers in the wide range



of clubs and activities. As planned, staff should identify and track the skills children are developing through their achievements as they progress through the school.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a very strong knowledge of the socio-economic context of their school. They know their children and families very well and provide relevant and meaningful support where required. They work closely with a local charity to provide free, high-quality, pre-loved uniform and food bank donations. All children can access free fruit every day. Senior leaders access grants and funding from local partners to support families financially very successfully when the need arises. Senior leaders use PEF and additional funding very effectively to ensure all children have equal access available to school trips and extra-curricular clubs. They also use PEF successfully to reduce the cost of the school day for all children.
- Senior leaders closely monitor and track attainment gaps in literacy and numeracy between cohorts of children, such as those facing financial hardship. They use PEF successfully to provide school assistants to support targeted interventions and raise attainment very effectively. In the last seven years, all teachers have made steady, significant progress towards closing the attainment gap significantly for those facing financial hardship in reading and numeracy. There is no longer an attainment gap in writing or listening and talking.



Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours per week progressive, high-quality physical education.
- All children receive their full entitlement to 1+2 modern languages. They learn French progressively and Scots language and aspects of Scottish culture.
- All classes have attractive class libraries with a range of appropriate fiction and non-fiction texts. Children enjoy borrowing books from the class library or bringing books from home to read for enjoyment in class.
- All children learn religious and moral education which is carefully planned by teachers using local authority progression frameworks. All children engage in religious observance regularly at in-school assemblies and services in the local parish church.



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.



Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

Dundonald Early Years Centre

South Ayrshire Council

20 January 2026

In November 2025, a team of inspectors from HMIE and the Care Inspectorate visited Dundonald Primary Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

Key inspection findings

- Children who are happy, engaged and making very good progress in their learning. This is very well supported by how senior leaders and staff use information about children's learning. They identify effectively when children may benefit from additional support or challenge in their learning and ensure this is in place.
- Skilled staff who provide high quality learning experiences for children in a calm and supportive learning environment. As a team, they have high standards and strive to do their best for children. They should now develop further the use of digital technologies to support children to develop skills and new understanding.
- Reflective teamwork strengthened relationships and promoted positive outcomes for children and families.
- Staff provided responsive care that promoted children's wellbeing, confidence, and emotional security.

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	very good
Nurturing, care and support	very good
Children's progress	very good

Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual Information

Dundonald Early Years Centre is part of Dundonald Primary School in South Ayrshire. The centre is registered for 49 children at any one time. It caters for children aged two to those not yet attending school. There are currently 40 children on the roll. Children can access their entitlement to funded early learning and childcare (ELC) by attending between 8.45 am and 3.00 pm, during term time. Parents can purchase additional 'wraparound' time from 8.30 am to 4 pm. The headteacher of the school has overall responsibility for the early years centre and is supported by the depute headteacher and a senior early years practitioner. Seven practitioners (6.9 FTE) and two additional support for learning assistants (0.7 FTE) support children across the week. A visiting peripatetic principal teacher supports learning and teaching one day each week.

The staff team are well established. The early years centre is part of the main school building and consists of two playrooms and children's toilets. Children access a large outdoor area from the playroom.

Leadership: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff demonstrated professional competence and a well-informed understanding of how children develop and learn. They worked well together as a team, showing a shared commitment to high expectations for every child. This was evident in both planned activities and responsive opportunities that supported children's learning and emotional development. As a result, children developed self-confidence and engaged actively in play and exploration.

Self-evaluation processes strengthened the quality of provision and promoted reflective approaches across the team. Staff regularly reviewed their own practice and used feedback to improve outcomes. This included tailored support for children and well-received family workshops. This meant staff responded effectively to individual needs, fostered children's social skills, independence, and meaningful family participation.

Leaders offered purposeful supervision and guidance that enhanced staff morale and clarified roles. A shared leadership approach encouraged professional growth and a positive team culture. This contributed to consistent care and an emotionally secure environment. As a result, staff felt motivated, valued, and proud of their contributions.

Professional learning was well embedded across the team and closely aligned with individual goals, service priorities, and national guidance. Staff engaged in reflective reading, targeted training, development days, and peer discussions to stay informed about current early years practice. This ongoing learning enhanced staff interactions, enriched children's experiences, and led to improved outcomes.

Staff-led initiatives such as Talk Boost, Bookbug, and block play effectively promoted children's language, creativity, and problem-solving skills. These experiences enhanced expression, expanded vocabulary, and strengthened peer interaction, supporting children's overall development.

The service had a clear and well-communicated vision centred on nurturing learning and achievement. This vision consistently guided daily practice and shaped the ethos of the setting. As a result, children felt safe, respected, and supported. They engaged enthusiastically in group activities, formed meaningful friendships, and developed a strong sense of belonging.

Staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and consistently upheld professional standards. Their values-based approach safeguarded children's welfare, fostered positive relationships, and ensured a secure, inclusive environment.

Staff deployment was well-organised and responsive to routines, children's voices, and individual needs. This enabled consistent supervision and meaningful interactions throughout the day, leading to enriching experiences.

Overall, staff demonstrated very good practice, guided by shared values, teamwork, and commitment to improvement, benefiting children and families.

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

Senior leaders and staff have created an ethos underpinned by the whole school vision of 'nurturing learning and achievement'. Staff model the school values of 'respect, kindness and perseverance' and encourage children to demonstrate them. Children are confident and increasingly independent as they follow their interests and make decisions about their learning. Most children sustain engagement for extended periods of time in their chosen experiences, for example, investigating properties of paint, block play and exploring books. Staff make very effective use of spaces available for learning, indoors, outdoors, the school building and the community. They are keen to provide even more real-life experiences for children, for example the use of real tools.

Reflecting the whole school relationship policy, staff have high and shared expectations of children. Almost all children play very well together, demonstrating respect and an increasing awareness of the needs of others. Staff have undertaken professional learning to develop highly effective skills in interacting with children,

particularly to support children's language and communication. This has impacted positively. All staff consistently interact with children in a very skilled, supportive and calm manner. Their interactions support children to be settled, engage in purposeful activities and importantly, have fun. Staff use an effective blend of questions and commentary to support, extend and challenge children's learning. Children explore digital technologies, including the interactive board and remote-control toys. Staff should now extend the use of digital technologies as a valuable tool to support and extend learning.

Staff gather a range of important information about children's learning including working with families to identify children's prior learning. They make careful observations of children as they play. Together, this information helps staff make accurate judgements about children's progress and inform what they may learn next. Staff reflect carefully on assessment information to ensure a shared understanding of children's progress and achievements. They are keen to now develop this reflection with colleagues beyond the setting. Staff document children's learning in 'special learning profiles' and share them with children and parents. Through developing the use of digital technologies, staff should increase access to empower children to reflect on their learning more spontaneously. Children, parents and staff work together to identify next steps in learning and children are very proud when they are successful in their 'special learning'.

Staff deliver a very effective balance of child-led and adult-initiated learning that is appropriate to the developmental stages of children. This includes extended periods of free flow play indoors and out and more focused group experiences. Senior leaders enable staff to meet regularly as a team to ensure a collegiate approach to planning for children's learning. Staff carefully plan relevant and motivating experiences in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and other curriculum areas. Over time, staff monitor they are providing a breadth of experiences across the curriculum. Staff use floorbooks to involve children in planning and documenting learning. They are keen to continue to develop further how they use floorbooks, for example ensuring children play an active role in planning their own learning.

Staff make very effective use of a range of documentation provided by the local authority to record, track and monitor children's progress across the curriculum. This helps staff demonstrate the progress children are making over time and identify where individuals may need support or challenge in their learning. The senior practitioner works with parents and other professionals, to devise helpful additional plans for children. This helps ensure children receive the support they need to help them learn. The headteacher meets with staff to review children's progress and helpfully provides support and challenge to ensure children make the best possible progress.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Shared values and professional practice were clearly reflected in the quality of care provided. Staff worked together effectively to enhance their approaches and improve outcomes for children. Warm, nurturing, and responsive interactions supported children's emotional wellbeing, secure attachments, and resilience.

Children were kept safe, treated with respect, and encouraged to express their needs through both verbal and pre-verbal communication. This approach supported their decision-making and contributed positively to their developmental progress.

Personal care routines were carried out with dignity and respect, maintained privacy and offered reassurance. Staff consistently adapted their approach to suit individual needs, both during personal care routines and throughout the day. This established clear boundaries and helped children to make choices and regulate their emotions with confidence.

Transitions between activities were thoughtfully planned, which created a calm and predictable environment. Staff used observations and knowledge of each child to tailor routines. This personalised approach strengthened individualised care and deeper engagement in learning.

The inclusive setting was thoughtfully planned and promoted social interaction. Daily routines such as welcome time and mealtimes offered valuable opportunities to build relationships, boost confidence, and reinforce a sense of security.

Meals followed the Setting the Table nutritional guidance and fresh drinking water was available throughout the day. Lunchtime routines were calm and well organised, which encouraged independence, healthy choices, and social development.

Personal planning was well established and regularly reviewed with families, which played a key role in supporting children's wellbeing, growth, and progress. Plans reflected each child's strengths, needs, and interests, and were guided by SHANARRI wellbeing indicators to inform assessment and decision-making. This enabled targeted support, promoted achievement, and ensured consistent care through a shared understanding of approaches.

Staff worked with external partners to implement tailored strategies that provided additional support for children. These joint efforts significantly enhanced children's developmental progress, emotional wellbeing, and learning outcomes.

The service prioritised strong family relationships. Communication was consistent through handovers, family events, meetings, newsletters, and diary updates. This

created a warm, welcoming environment where families felt valued, respected, and involved.

Staff acknowledged the impact of family, community, and lived experiences on each child's development. They built on family strengths and responded sensitively to individual circumstances. Updates from home informed care, and barriers to involvement were reduced. This enriched children's experiences and supported them to reach their full potential.

Overall, children and families consistently benefited from high-quality, nurturing care and support. Staff's reflective practice, targeted planning, and responsive approaches contributed to meaningful experiences and positive outcomes across wellbeing, development, and relationships.

Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Almost all children are making very good progress as a result of high expectations of staff and high-quality nursery experiences. Staff provide very personalised support to all children that results in strong progress from individual developmental stages. Almost all children are confident and are developing a range of skills including independence and resilience in their learning.

Almost all children are increasingly able to regulate their own emotions. Staff support this very well which is enabling children to identify and talk about their feelings. Almost all children demonstrate well-developed social skills including turn taking, awareness of others and increasing empathy for the needs and feelings of others. Staff have a consistent focus on supporting the development of early language and communication for all children. They sensitively support and encourage children to communicate their thoughts and feelings including through gesture, single words, short and more sophisticated sentences. Many children enjoy the nurturing experience of sharing a book with a familiar adult. Most children can talk about favourite texts, are developing an awareness of letter names and sounds and identify rhyming words. Almost all children enjoy exploring mark making in a range of contexts, including outdoors. In numeracy and mathematics, most children use number confidently in their play. They are motivated as they explore, develop and apply skills in information handling and identifying and recreating pattern.

Almost all children benefit from, and are motivated by, exploring new learning across all areas of the curriculum. Most children confidently recall previous experiences and make links with new learning. This is helping them make sense of their world. Staff should continue to support children to develop further new skills and understanding, for example in the use of digital technologies.



Staff provide very natural and meaningful recognition and celebration of the achievements of individuals. They are careful to recognise children's strengths and developing skills which supports children's sense of wellbeing very well. Recently staff have created a 'wow wall' of children's achievements out with nursery. They should continue to encourage families to contribute. As planned, staff should ensure this information informs their planning and builds on what children already know and can do. Children are proud of their achievements, including their 'special learning' and most can talk confidently, and with pride, about their successes.

Staff have extensive knowledge of children and families. Senior leaders make robust and creative use of data to identify any potential barriers to learning and ensure an inclusive ethos. With staff, they work in thoughtful and responsive ways to, where possible, minimise any challenges to children's progress. This includes using strategies to develop and improve children's communication. When staff put additional supports in place, they carefully measure the impact to ensure effectiveness. Senior leaders and staff carefully monitor children's attendance to ensure all children benefit from ELC experiences. Staff have productive partnerships with families that successfully support children's progress, including regular sessions where parents and children can learn together.

Safeguarding (HMI)

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

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.

Barbara Daly
HM Inspector

Eileen McColgan
Care Inspector