# Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

## Craigroyston Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council
28 April 2026

In February 2026, a team of inspectors from HMIE and the Care Inspectorate visited Craigroyston Primary School Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

## Key inspection findings

- Children are enthusiastic and play well alongside each other. They benefit from strong nurturing bonds with staff and demonstrate they feel happy, safe and cared for.
- Senior leaders and staff work together to provide a positive, inclusive learning environment. This is a key strength of the nursery. Children choose from well-planned learning spaces and experiences indoors and outdoors which promote a real sense of enjoyment and purpose in learning.
- Staff interact warmly with children and respond meaningfully to their interests. They need to continue to develop their questioning skills to extend further children's knowledge and understanding.
- Staff collaborate well to plan children's learning and track their progress. They need to strengthen these processes further to ensure they capture children's significant learning.
- Supported by senior leaders, staff have made a very positive start to taking forward leadership roles to improve outcomes for children. Their commitment to professional learning and collaboration within the team is a strength. Children benefit from the enrichment of learning experiences outdoors, support with communication skills and attendance at nursery.
- Children enjoy mealtimes throughout the day. Staff should enhance these experiences further by adjusting the lunchtime routine. They should promote further conversation, connection and encouragement as children sit together for their meals.
- Staff work in close partnership with families and other professionals to ensure children's personal plans are inclusive and responsive to their changing needs. Positive relationships with partner agencies support continuity of care and help ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

- Senior leaders and staff demonstrate a deep understanding of the context in which children live, grow and learn. Their work with and support for families is resulting in positive outcomes for children.

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 | 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

Craigroyston Nursery Class is situated within Craigroyston Primary School in the Muirhouse Community in the northwest of The City of Edinburgh. The nursery is registered for 60 children at any one time from the age of three to those not yet attending primary school. The roll at the time of the inspection was 42. The nursery is open term-time, Monday to Thursday from 8.30 am until 3.00 pm, and on a Friday from 8.30 am until 12.30 pm. The nursery comprises of two playrooms and a large, secure outdoor space which children access freely. Staff also utilise spaces within the primary school to extend children's learning opportunities.

Leadership of the nursery class is delegated to a depute headteacher who also has a remit within the school. There are two early years officers, seven early years practitioners across the week, an early years assistant, a domestic assistant and an Excellence and Equity lead.

There have been significant changes within the staff team in recent years. This has had an impact on the pace of change.

## Leadership:
## Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Children benefitted from a staff team that were dedicated, child centred, and demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting high quality care and learning that supported children's development.

Staff interactions were warm, nurturing, and responsive. Demonstrating a professional love for children. The team consistently applied the setting's vision, values, and aims which were respect, ambition, resilience and empathy this approach contributed to positive experiences for children.

Each staff member brought particular skills, strengths, and professional expertise, that offered children a breadth of learning across the curriculum. Staff showed an understanding of child development and were able to adapt experiences to extend children's interests, learning styles, and wellbeing needs. This ensured children experienced continuity in learning and consistency of care.

Communication across the team was clear and purposeful. Staff shared relevant information effectively to support transitions and maintain children's safety and wellbeing. This meant staff worked together and were focused on meeting all children's needs.

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Staff showed confidence in safeguarding procedures and understood their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. All staff had been trained to Level 2 in Child Protection, and Early Years Officers held Level 4 training. This meant all staff were fully aware of measures they should take to ensure children's safety and wellbeing. We suggested that opportunities for professional learning in trauma informed practice could further strengthen staff skills and confidence. Professional learning was valued across the team, and staff engaged reflectively in training, personal reading and quality improvement activities, which had begun to positively influence practice.

Staff had begun to develop distributed leadership roles, showing increasing ownership of improvement priorities. As this work was at an early stage, more time was required to fully embed roles and evaluate their impact on improving children's experiences. Staff were proactive, reflective, and committed to improving outcomes for children and families. Their positive engagement in self-evaluation ensured continued progress and a shared focus on enhancing the quality of provision. Staff deployment was effective and flexible. Staff positioned themselves appropriately to maintain children's safety, support learning and routines. Strong teamwork and clear communication helped maintain a calm, organised, and nurturing environment.

During busy times of the day such as lunchtime, staff worked well together; however, the routine would benefit from further consideration to ensure waiting times are reduced to promote a more meaningful lunch time routine that promoted opportunities for connection. For example, organising two tables of six with a staff member at each table would have supported richer interactions, encouraged independence, and ensured children had time to enjoy a nutritious and balanced meal.

New staff had been well supported through effective induction and mentoring, ensuring consistency and high-quality practice across the team.

## Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

All staff foster caring and nurturing relationships with children and their families, and they know the children very well. Almost all children feel secure with all members of the staff team, who welcome them into the nursery as individuals. All staff share an understanding of their ways of working together. They model the nursery values consistently and promote respectful relationships across the nursery. All staff are passionate about and successfully create an ethos and environment of inclusion for all children.

Most children investigate and explore their play spaces enthusiastically as they choose to move freely between indoors and outdoors. They play confidently in learning spaces outdoors. This encourages their curiosity and provides opportunities for children to understand risk using a wide range of equipment. Children enjoy

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exploring loose parts in the environmental garden. They demonstrate how well they work together with their friends. Most children make positive choices as they engage in a wide variety of activities indoors. They use sensory and exploratory play in their own way to develop their skills and understanding of the world around them.

As staff develop their own pedagogical framework, children have increasing opportunities to make meaningful contributions to their learning spaces. For example, a few children contribute readily to mind maps to plan their learning. Most children make decisions about the play materials they would like to choose, based on their current interests. Most staff attune well to children's wellbeing and developmental needs, as they plan and develop the learning spaces. Most children engage well and sustain concentration in experiences they choose themselves. Staff should continue to refine how effectively they plan the nursery day around children's needs. For example, children may benefit from a short together time with their keyworker to share stories and reflect on their learning.

Most staff communicate confidently and warmly with children. Their interactions with them show increasing skill in helping children to play, learn and regulate their emotions. Most staff promote inclusion well for children with barriers to learning. They do this through the consistent use of signing to support everyday communication. Staff work collaboratively to develop their understanding of effective early level pedagogy for their own context. They are beginning to put this into practice through distributed leadership across the team. Most staff use questioning and commentary thoughtfully to support children's thinking. As a team, they need to continue to develop increased confidence in the consistent use of open-ended questions. This will help them extend children's knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

Most children use a range of digital technologies enthusiastically as they discover what they can do. They access games on devices independently and enjoy photographing their experiences. Staff provide matrix bar codes to support and extend learning opportunities. Staff have rightly identified the need to continue to develop the quality of children's digital learning as a team. This will ensure children use digital technology effectively to add value to their play experiences.

All staff contribute to intentional planning regularly which recognises well children's prior learning, interests and their developmental milestones. This approach is beginning to deepen staff's understanding of how to plan holistically for children. It is also enabling them to build a clearer understanding of children's individual circumstances, preferences and learning needs. Staff value this approach as it is collaborative, incorporates professional learning and enables them to moderate standards with each other. They recognise they need to continue to strengthen their approaches to planning children's learning. This will help them extend their use of children's next steps and to plan for the right level of challenge in all play spaces.

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Staff who are key workers record learning in electronic journals for all children. These are shared regularly with families. Staff need to improve further their approaches to documenting children's learning. As a next step, they need to ensure they capture children's significant learning consistently. Senior leaders and staff use local authority approaches regularly to track children's progress. Senior leaders are supporting staff to develop consistency and effectiveness in their approaches to tracking children's learning and engagement. This will help them judge more confidently the progress children make over time.

## Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for by a nurturing and loving staff team. Warm, responsive, and consistent interactions throughout the day supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Staff were attuned to children's verbal and non-verbal cues and responded quickly and sensitively to offer comfort, reassurance, or support when needed. The use of Sign along had further enhanced communication, enabling children to express their needs confidently and promoted inclusive interactions.

Daily routines promoted independence, strengthened relationships, and supported children's emotional regulation. Transitions were thoughtfully planned and sensitively managed, helping children feel secure, calm, and confident as they moved between activities and spaces. The environment had been carefully considered, offering opportunities for rich and stimulating play while also providing quiet, nurturing spaces where children could rest when needed.

Children's meals and snacks were provided in line with current guidance, and fresh water was always available. Mealtimes also helped children to develop important early life skills, this included preparing and serving their snacks giving them ownership of this routine.

Personal plans clearly reflected each child's needs, strengths, and interests. They were developed with families and reviewed regularly to keep them up to date. We suggested including a section to record when there were no changes so this was clear and easy to follow. Staff worked in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure they were inclusive and responsive to children's changing needs.

Transitions, particularly for children with additional support needs (ASN), were strengthened through effective information sharing to support consistency in strategies from home to nursery. Positive relationships with health visitors and partner agencies supported continuity of care and helped ensure children received the right support at the right time.

Staff had prioritised building strong, trusting relationships with children and their families. Families were warmly welcomed into the service each morning, helping them

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feel valued, included, and respected. Family engagement was developing well, and further embedding this work could give broader opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to service development for example, through focus groups and evaluating family learning sessions.

Staff made effective use of local initiatives such as low income families together (LIFT) and the food bank to provide supportive, practical help when needed. This was delivered with dignity, respect, and a strong understanding of individual circumstances. Communication with families was positive and to ensure consistency, staff should continue to use families' preferred communication methods to help them feel informed, connected, and confident in the care their children received.

## Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Children engage joyously in a wide range of fun and engaging experiences which reflect their current interests. Staff work hard as a team to plan learning experiences across the curriculum. These encourage most children to show motivation and independence in their learning. Most children are confident, making their own choices about where they want to play. They are resilient, willing to practise their skills and enjoy celebrating their achievements. Children who have additional support needs benefit from the support of adults to help them succeed in their learning. As a result of the nurture and determination of staff, most children make good progress in their learning.

Children's progress in health and wellbeing is prioritised by staff. Most children are beginning to learn about the national wellbeing indicators through their interactions with the adults around them. This is helping children to begin to talk more openly about their emotions and feelings. Most children spend time outdoors each day. A few children prefer to spend most of their time outdoors and staff provide rest areas and shelter when required. Most children are highly engaged outdoors. They explore, investigate, and create structures with loose parts. Children help to design the formation of their climbing equipment and demonstrate balance, agility and careful climbing. Staff provide a wide range of large physical equipment throughout the day to ensure children develop important gross motor skills. Children enjoy sociable mealtimes and are gaining in confidence as they serve themselves. Most children talk about foods they enjoy and that help their bodies to be healthy. Staff need to continue to enhance mealtimes to extend children's skills.

Children are supported thoughtfully by staff as they develop their knowledge and skills in early language and mathematics. Staff use professional learning well to deepen their understanding of the curriculum, and to learn how they can improve further children's progress over time. Children are supported by staff to use signing to help them articulate their wants and needs. This is reducing barriers to communication. Most children listen and talk well and are developing vocabulary through learning experiences and in their conversations with staff. Children like staff

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to read with them and engage very well in discussion about the story and illustrations. The majority of children show a keen interest in mark making. They write and draw purposefully, often alongside their friends. They contribute meaningfully to illustrate and label the many displays around the playrooms. Most children use numbers to help them play games and count as they sing favourite songs. Children now need to be supported to explore a wider range of early mathematical concepts as they play and learn.

Senior leaders and staff have made a positive start to recognising children's achievements, particularly those from home. They encourage families to talk about children's successes and positive wellbeing. Families are beginning to display children's achievements from home on the nursery tree. This is enabling children to discuss their successes with staff and each other throughout the day, promoting a sense of pride. Children are beginning to have their achievements in nursery recognised through the Craigie Values Certificates. Staff have rightly identified the need to continue to work alongside families and the community to strengthen how they recognise children's achievements. Staff should now keep a close check, as planned, on the skills children gain through their achievements. This will help them to plan for and build on these strengths throughout children's nursery experiences.

Senior leaders and staff are very sensitive in the ways they gather data about the contexts in which children and families live. They have a clear understanding of the factors which can create barriers for families in relation to participation and children's progress. Staff improve continuously the attendance of children. They measure and can demonstrate the benefits to children when they attend more regularly. Senior leaders and staff, as a result of their trusting relationships, provide well-timed support to children and families. They access a wide range of partners and organisations which can provide short and long-term support. Senior leaders and staff are beginning to identify and track the impact of universal and targeted supports for children. As they build on this approach, this will help them, in time, to identify clearly how well children make progress as a result of their interventions.

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

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## 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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HM Inspector

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Care Inspector

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