Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

Pitteuchar West Primary School Nursery Class

Fife Council

23 June 2026

In April 2026, a team of inspectors from HMIE and the Care Inspectorate visited Pitteuchar West 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 kind, caring and respectful of one another. They confidently share their ideas and views to plan and shape their learning experiences and the spaces where they learn. They are highly motivated, curious and enthusiastic to learn new skills and enjoy building on what they already know.
- Staff create a warm and welcoming learning environment. They are highly committed to supporting children to feel happy, safe and valued. They work collaboratively with parents and partners to ensure children succeed and progress in their learning.
- Effective leadership and self-evaluation support continuous improvement in children's care, learning and safety. Well-embedded quality assurance and reflective practice enable staff to improve consistently, ensuring children experience safe, well-managed care that meets their learning and wellbeing needs.
- Staff know children very well. They plan for and make effective use of a range of information to ensure learning is appropriately challenging and supportive for all children. As a result, children continue to make very good progress because of their nursery experience.
- Personal planning is used effectively to provide consistent, individualised care. Clear, up-to-date personal plans and learning journals support continuity, meet additional needs well and help ensure children feel secure, involved and supported throughout the day.
- As planned, senior leaders should continue to support staff to develop and share effective practice in recording observations of children's learning. They should build on current strengths and help ensure children's progress is understood and supported.

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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

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Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual Information

Pitteuchar West Primary School Nursery Class is located within Pitteuchar West Primary School in the town of Glenrothes, Fife. The nursery provides early learning and childcare (ELC) for up to 38 children at one time, from three years to those not yet attending school. There are 33 children on the roll. Children access their funded ELC entitlement through two attendance patterns. These include term time provision from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm and an all year-round model from 8.00 am to 12.00 pm every morning. The nursery has planned intakes of new children throughout the year.

The nursery is situated within the grounds of the school and consists of a playroom, cloakroom area and children's toilets. Children have direct access from the playroom to a dedicated outdoor learning space.

The acting headteacher has been in post since January 2026 and has overall responsibility for the nursery. She is supported by a depute headteacher who has delegated responsibility for the day to day running of the nursery. The nursery is supported by a principal nursery teacher and three child development officers who share their time between Pitteuchar West and another local nursery. There are a further eight staff working within the service. This includes a senior early years officer (SEYO), early years officers (EYO), pupil support officer (PSO) and a peripatetic nursery teacher .

Leadership:
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Children benefitted from a strong and committed staff team who demonstrated a clear, shared vision for the service. This was supported by 'The Pitteuchar West Way', a staff-developed approach that helped promote shared values and consistency in practice. As a result, staff worked well together and demonstrated confidence, reflective practice and a clear commitment to supporting positive outcomes for children.

Staff showed a strong understanding of child development and how children learn. Practice was informed by ongoing professional learning, reflection and professional dialogue. Staff were confident in sharing their individual strengths and expertise with colleagues, creating a culture of learning together. This collaborative approach extended beyond the service, with staff contributing to professional learning and improvement activity across the local early learning and childcare community.

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Staff were very well deployed throughout the day, including across indoor and outdoor environments. This ensured children were well supported while still able to make choices, take manageable risks and be independent. Communication between staff was very effective, with clear and consistent sharing of information about children's needs, routines and play experiences. As a result, all staff were confident in their roles and highly responsive to children.

Transitions were calm, well managed and highly positive. Staff anticipated transitions and worked together to support children smoothly between activities and spaces, promoting emotional security and continuity of care. Effective planning and management of staff breaks ensured that continuity of care was maintained. Children moved confidently throughout the setting, knowing what to expect and who was available to support them.

Interactions between staff and children were purposeful, warm and responsive. Staff tuned into children's cues and extended learning sensitively, consistently adding value to children's play and learning experiences. These strengths resulted in a nurturing, well-organised environment where children experienced high-quality care and learning.

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

Staff build strong, positive relationships with children and their families and create a warm, nurturing learning environment. They work collaboratively, guided by a strong commitment to knowing every child well and supporting them to feel confident, included and ready to learn. Children who are new to the nursery are supported sensitively and effectively to become familiar with routines and build trusting relationships with staff. Almost all children settle quickly into nursery and show very high levels of engagement and independence.

Staff place children's rights fully at the heart of their daily practice. Children's rights guide how they plan and shape learning experiences and environments for learning. They skilfully listen to children and create stimulating and motivating learning opportunities that build on their interests, curiosity and ideas. This helps children understand their rights in meaningful ways. Children benefit from choosing when to have their lunch, voting on special projects and what they would like to learn. Staff provide a wide range of very effective learning opportunities across indoor, outdoor and community environments that stimulate children's curiosity and emerging interests very well. They provide interesting ways for children to use digital technologies to enhance and support their learning about animal habitats and the world around them. This helps almost all children confidently share their choices, ideas and views and consistently influence decision making within the nursery.

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Staff communicate meaningfully and regularly with parents, respecting and valuing their insights about their children. They work in partnership with parents to support children's continued progress. The setting's 'Believe to Achieve' approach unites how staff work together, guiding their interactions with both children and families. Staff consistently demonstrate high expectations for children's learning and wellbeing. They show a strong commitment to supporting every child to succeed and continue to make progress in their learning and development. They listen carefully to children and demonstrate a strong understanding of what excites and motivates them to learn. Staff skilfully use open ended questions and thoughtful commentary to build on children's interests and support them to explore their ideas deeply. This helps almost all children remain highly engaged in their play and to make positive progress in all areas of their learning.

Staff plan children's learning very effectively, using a range of approaches to support all children, including those who require additional support. They skilfully balance intentional planning with responsive approaches to support children's learning across the breadth of the Curriculum for Excellence. Together, staff review plans weekly to evaluate their impact on individual children and to plan their next steps. They draw on assessment information from observations and personal learning journals to personalise children's learning. They use a highly effective 'learning wall' approach that provides a clear and accessible planning visual for children and staff. These planning approaches capture children's significant interests fully and support staff to act on their emerging ideas very successfully. This ensures learning remains relevant, inclusive and closely matched to all children's needs and views. Staff should continue to build on the good practice of recording children's learning. They should moderate and share good practice to ensure observations consistently demonstrate significant aspects of children's learning.

Senior leaders have developed a clear tracking and monitoring system that captures a wide range of important information about children's learning and development. They use this information very well to identify patterns, track individual progress and ensure children receive appropriate and timely support and challenge. Staff work in strong partnership with agencies and parents to review tracking information regularly and identify where children may require additional support. This approach has been highly successful in ensuring all children make consistent and positive progress over time.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, respectful and highly responsive care throughout the setting. Staff demonstrated a genuine love and care for children, which was evident in the quality of interactions, their attentiveness to emotional wellbeing and the calm, reassuring support provided during daily routines. Predictable structures and

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consistent approaches enabled children to move confidently between spaces and routines.

Staff supported children sensitively, particularly those new to the service. They took time to build trusting relationships, respond to individual cues and provide reassurance, helping children feel safe, secure and valued. Children's emotional wellbeing was clearly prioritised.

Staff knew children and their families very well. This strong knowledge informed how care and support were tailored to meet individual needs. Relationships with families were warm, respectful and positive, supporting continuity between home and the setting and enabling staff to respond effectively to each child.

Personal plans and personal learning journals were a particular strength. They were well organised, accessible and clearly reflected children's needs, interests and next steps. Staff used this information effectively in practice, ensuring that strategies to support individual children were consistent and well understood by all staff. Children showed pride in their learning journals and demonstrated a strong sense of ownership and involvement in their learning.

Support for children with additional support needs and medical needs was clear, well planned and consistently implemented. Individualised support strategies were detailed and regularly reviewed, ensuring children's needs were met as they changed over time.

Children's rights and voice were embedded in practice. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles were visible and meaningfully linked to learning, and children were actively involved in decision-making through everyday routines and choices.

Effective leadership, quality assurance and partnership working underpinned the positive experiences for children. Regular wellbeing check-ins, clear quality assurance processes and effective information sharing supported children's safety and wellbeing. The improvement plan was focused and achievable, and staff used self-evaluation well to support continuous improvement.

Links with families, partners and the wider community were a clear strength. In particular, the partnership with the local care home had a very positive impact on children's learning and development, supporting confidence, empathy, communication skills and a strong sense of belonging. As a result of these strengths, children experienced consistently high-quality nurturing care and support.

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Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Children make very good progress as a result of their nursery experience. They demonstrate secure and sustained progress across a broad range of learning. Staff use their exceptionally strong knowledge of children as individuals to support their development and progress over time. The carefully considered learning environments provide a wide range of well-planned opportunities that enable almost all children to successfully explore and develop a broad set of skills. Meaningful interactions, experiences and learning spaces support children to learn new skills through sciences, technologies, expressive arts and religious and moral education. They manipulate clay and design models, take part in experiments and predict what will happen next. They use instruments to make music and play along to songs. Children are consistently motivated to learn and extend their learning confidently across all curriculum areas.

All children make very strong progress in developing their health and wellbeing skills. Through frequent forest sessions, children are increasingly confident, resilient and independent as they manage appropriate risk, cooperate with others and persevere with challenges. Visits to the local care home help children build positive relationships and early citizenship skills very well beyond the nursery. They strengthen their communication skills, empathy and sense of belonging through special companionships with their intergenerational friends. Children confidently recognise, name and talk about their feelings. They use puppets and helpful visual supports to understand and manage their emotions. Regular monitoring and assessment of children's progress ensures that children's health and wellbeing development is clearly understood by all staff. Tracking approaches demonstrate that all children are making very good progress over time in this important area.

Children develop strong early literacy skills during their time at nursery. They listen attentively to stories, join confidently in rhymes and songs, engage in imaginative play and use expressive language to share ideas and experiences. Over time, they understand and use more complex vocabulary through their play and build early reading awareness with increasing confidence and clarity. In numeracy, children show clear progression as they explore number, shape, pattern and measure through practical, meaningful experiences. They move from early recognition and exploration of number to applying their learning through increasingly complex pattern work, shape investigation and problem-solving experiences. They use tally marks and graphs to display their findings. Children make very good progress and develop growing confidence in early literacy and numeracy learning.

Staff show a very strong commitment to supporting every child to achieve and succeed. They adopt a reflective and enquiring approach to using data and assessment to gain a deep understanding of children's learning and progress. They work highly effectively with partners to identify children's strengths and next step in learning. Senior leaders strengthen this work by implementing robust tracking and

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monitoring systems that capture children's progress over time and prompt timely support when needed. As a result of highly reflective practice all children make strong progress towards developmental milestones appropriate to their stage of development.

Staff recognise and celebrate each child's achievements in ways that are highly meaningful and personalised. Through everyday interactions children become increasingly aware of the skills they are developing. Staff effectively share and value children's achievements from home and the wider community, creating regular opportunities for children to talk confidently about their successes. Overall, attendance at the centre is very good. Staff monitor attendance carefully and work with families to provide support including flexible transitions or targeted routines. Through tracking senior leaders and staff take a proactive and inclusive approach to ensuring all children have frequent opportunities to achieve and celebrate their developing talents. This supports every child to feel confident and motivated to learn.

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.

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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