

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 22 APRIL 2026

REPORT ON: INSPECTION OF CRAIGIEBARNs PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 105-2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform committee on the findings of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Scotland (HMIE) inspection of Craigiebarns Primary School, and the findings of the shared inspection by HMIE and the Care Inspectorate of Craigiebarns Nursery Class in November 2025.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee notes:

- a) the findings and key messages of the external inspection; and
- b) arrangements in place to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement outlined in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the agreement of this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings are subject to external scrutiny. Secondary, Special and Primary schools with or without ELC provision are inspected by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE). ELC provision, including those within a primary school, are inspected either by HMIE or Care Inspectorate as single agencies, or jointly as a shared inspection model. Inspections use national frameworks and a six-point evaluation scale, with safeguarding considered in all cases. HMIE and Care Inspectorate publish reports setting out strengths, areas for improvement and capacity to improve. More detailed information about approaches to inspections in schools and ELC settings is included in Appendix 1.

4.2 Craigiebarns Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected by HMIE in November 2025. There were two separate models of inspection. A full model inspection, focused on the four quality indicators detailed in Table 1 was undertaken within the primary school, whilst a full model shared inspection was carried out within the nursery class by an HMIE inspector and an inspector from the Care Inspectorate. This was focused on four quality indicators, as detailed in Table 2. There was a focus on safeguarding in both the primary school and nursery class inspections. HM Inspectors of Education published reports of both sets of findings on 17 February 2026.

Table 1 How Good is Our School (HGIOS) Quality Indicators

1.3	Leadership of change
2.3	Learning, teaching, and assessment
3.1	Ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion
3.2	Raising attainment and achievement

Table 2 A Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare Quality Indicators

Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment
Learning, teaching and assessment
Nurturing care and support
Children's progress

4.3 Craigiebarns Primary School is a non-denominational school located in the City of Dundee. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 286 children, organised across 11 mainstream classes. The nursery class provides early learning and childcare (ELC) provision for children from the age of 3 years. At the time of the inspection, there were 40 children attending term time provision, aged three to those not yet attending primary school.

4.4 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since August 2019. The Head Teacher is supported by a Depute Head Teacher.

4.5 Approximately 35% of children who attend the school live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. At the time of inspection, the school reported that approximately 28% of children on the roll require additional support with their learning. There is approximately 16% of children in P6 and P7 registered for free school meals. The school's Pupil Equity Fund allocation is £95,550.

5.0 KEY INSPECTION FINDINGS CRAIGIEBARNS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

Key Strengths for the Primary School

5.1 Appendix 2 provides a synopsis of the Summary of Inspection Findings (a link to the full document is also provided in the Appendix). The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Children across the school are happy, well-mannered and eager to learn. They are proud of the school. They exemplify very well the school values in their lives in school.
- Led by the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and children have established an effective culture of leadership across the school. Staff and children feel empowered to lead change.
- Senior leaders, staff and children work very effectively with a wide range of local and national organisations. These partnerships enhance and strengthen children's learning experiences.
- Children benefit from a range of opportunities to extend and deepen their wider achievement. Children develop important skills across a range of different contexts.

Key Strengths for the Nursery Class

5.2 Appendix 2 provides a synopsis of the inspection findings. The inspection team found the following strengths in the work of the Nursery Class:

- Staff were committed to children's wellbeing and learning.
- Relationships across the nursery are strong. Staff know children and families very well. There is a welcoming, inclusive and caring ethos within the nursery.
- Children received respectful care that promoted emotional security and confidence.
- Staff work well together to create well-resourced, stimulating learning spaces indoors and outdoors.

Areas for Improvement for the Primary School

5.3 The following areas for improvement were identified:

- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to strengthen approaches to planning for improvement. As they do so they should involve all stakeholders in evaluating the work of the school.
- Senior leaders and teachers should develop further their approaches to provide consistently high-quality learning and teaching in all classes. They should ensure that all children experience tasks and activities set at the right level of difficulty. This should provide appropriate challenges to children who can achieve more.
- As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop planning and assessment processes to meet the needs of all children and support them to make the best possible progress. This includes children who require additional support in learning.

Areas for Improvement for the Nursery Class

5.4 The following areas for improvement were identified:

- Structured professional development and reflective practice will support greater consistency in quality.
- Strengthening personal planning will support consistent responses to individual needs and wellbeing.
- Staff should further develop their skills in high quality interactions to support, challenge and extend children's learning.

6.0 INSPECTION EVALUATIONS

6.1 During inspections HM Inspectors gather evidence to enable them to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from How Good is our School? (4th edition). In the Nursery Class, HM Inspectors and Care Inspectorate Officers evaluate the work of the nursery class using quality indicators from A Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare.

6.2 HMIE and the Care Inspectorate report using a six-point scale for reporting performance:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

6.3 HMIE evaluations for Craigiebarns Primary School following this inspection are:

Quality Indicator	
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

HMIE and Care Inspectorate evaluations for Craigiebarns Nursery Class following this inspection are:

Quality Indicator	
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	Good
Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
Nurturing care and support	Good
Children's progress	Good

- 6.4 HMIE wrote to parents and carers to confirm that, as a result of the inspection findings, HM Inspectors are confident that the school and nursery class have the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection (both letters are included in Appendix 3). Dundee City Council will inform parents and carers about the school's progress through Craigiebarns Primary's annual School Improvement Report.
- 6.5 Craigiebarns Primary School and Nursery Class Improvement Plans (2026/27 and beyond) will include a focus on the identified areas for improvement. Plans will be regularly reviewed, monitored, and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority's quality improvement processes.
- 6.6 As part of the Children and Families Service School Improvement Framework, visits are made to the school and nursery class by the school's link Quality Improvement Education Officers to ensure the positive improvement journey continues and monitor progress towards the action points raised in the inspection. Furthermore, as part of the Service's 'Every Dundee Learner Matters' collaborative improvement strategy, the School Improvement Partnership which Craigiebarns Primary School are part of, will continue to support and challenge school improvement.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

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March 2026

APPENDIX 1

INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS AND EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (ELC) SETTINGS – FRAMEWORKS, MODELS AND OUTPUTS

PURPOSE

This appendix explains how inspections are carried out across primary and secondary schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings, and why inspection reports presented to Scrutiny and Audit Committee may differ in structure, content and attachments.

It is intended to support Scrutiny and Audit Committee members in interpreting inspection papers and is applicable to all future inspection reports.

Schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings are subject to external scrutiny. Secondary, Special and Primary schools with or without ELC provision are inspected by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE). ELC provision, including those within a Primary school, are inspected either by HMIE or Care Inspectorate as single agencies, or jointly as a shared inspection model. Inspections use national frameworks and a six-point evaluation scale, with safeguarding considered in all cases. HMIE and Care Inspectorate publish reports setting out strengths, areas for improvement and capacity to improve.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

All primary and secondary schools are inspected by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) using the same national inspection framework, [*How Good Is Our School? \(Fourth Edition\)*](#). This framework applies consistently across both sectors.

HMIE use two inspection models in schools. A short model inspection focuses on two Quality Indicators, selected from the same set used in a full inspection. A full model inspection considers four Quality Indicators (QI) These are:

- QI 1.3 Leadership of change
- QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
- QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

In a short model inspection focuses on Quality Indicators 2.3 and 3.2.

Safeguarding is always considered as part of the inspection process.

Regardless of whether a short or full model inspection is undertaken, the outputs are consistent.

Following inspection, HMIE publish:

- an **Inspection Report** in the form of a letter to parents. This includes:
 - key strengths
 - areas for improvement
 - the Quality Indicator evaluations using the six-point scale, and

- the overall inspection outcome.
- **Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF)**, which provide more detailed narrative evidence against the Quality Indicators evaluated.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE INSPECTIONS

Early learning and childcare settings are inspected using a different national framework, [A Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare sectors](#). This was initially launched in draft form in January 2025 but only used in inspections from September 2025 onwards.

This framework includes eleven Quality Indicators aligned to the following four themes:

- Leadership
- Children thrive and develop in quality spaces
- Children play and learn
- Children are supported to achieve

Safeguarding and child protection is considered as part of all inspections, irrespective of the model.

As ELC inspections now operate under a shared inspection framework, this means that inspections may be carried out by HMIE alone, Care Inspectorate alone, or HMIE and Care Inspectorate jointly. This approach began from September 2025 onwards.

This affects both the Quality Indicators (QI) evaluated and the format of inspection reports and letters. This means that inspection Scrutiny and Audit Committee papers for related ELC provisions, including where the ELC provision is part of a primary school, can look different from school inspection papers and from each other.

The Quality Indicators inspected during each model of inspection are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Quality Indicators associated with each inspection model, listed under each Theme

Shared Inspection: Care Inspectorate and HMIE	Single Inspection: HMIE	Single Inspection: Care Inspectorate
Quality Indicators (4)	Quality Indicators (3)	Quality Indicators (3)
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment Children play and learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning, teaching and assessment Children are supported to achieve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nurturing care and support ● Children’s progress 	Children play and learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curriculum ● Learning, teaching and assessment Children are supported to achieve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wellbeing, inclusion and equality 	Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leadership, management of staff and resources Children play and learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Playing, learning and developing Children are supported to achieve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nurturing care and support
Safeguarding and child protection		

WHY COMMITTEE REPORTS DIFFER

Differences in Scrutiny and Audit Committee inspection papers reflect the inspection framework used, the inspection model applied, and whether one or more inspection agencies were involved. They do not reflect differences in the level of scrutiny or assurance.

In summary:

- inspection reports for primary schools without ELC provision and secondary schools are consistent because the framework, models and outputs are the same; and
- inspection reports for ELC provisions, including where the ELC provision is part of a primary school, may vary because inspections can be single HMIE inspections or shared HMIE and the Care Inspectorate inspections, because different Quality Indicators are evaluated, and because agencies publish their findings in different ways.

For transparency and accuracy, inspection findings are reported to Scrutiny and Audit Committee as published, without re-scoring or aligning Quality Indicators across different frameworks.

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APPENDIX 2

Dundee City Council

Children and Families Service

Scrutiny and Audit Committee Report Summary Notes

Inspection and Reporting

Inspection Agencies	HMIE and Care Inspectorate
Report Publication Date	17 February 2026
Name of Establishment	Craigiebarns Primary School and Nursery Class
Sector	Primary and Nursery
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Karen Clarke
Roll	286 primary children and 40 nursery children

Inspection Outcomes 2026

Quality Indicator	Craigiebarns Primary School
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

Quality Indicator	Craigiebarns Nursery Class
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	Good
Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
Nurturing care and support	Good
Children's progress	Good

The reports use the following word scale:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Inspection Outcomes November 2025

Key Strengths for Primary School

- Children across the school are happy, well-mannered and eager to learn. They are proud of the school. They exemplify very well the school values in their lives in school.
- Led by the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and children have established an effective culture of leadership across the school. Staff and children feel empowered to lead change.
- Senior leaders, staff and children work very effectively with a wide range of local and national organisations. These partnerships enhance and strengthen children's learning experiences.
- Children benefit from a range of opportunities to extend and deepen their wider achievement. Children develop important skills across a range of different contexts.

Key Strengths for Nursery Class

- Staff were committed to children's wellbeing and learning.
- Relationships across the nursery are strong. Staff know children and families very well. There is a welcoming, inclusive and caring ethos within the nursery.
- Children received respectful care that promoted emotional security and confidence.
- Staff work well together to create well-resourced, stimulating learning spaces indoors and outdoors.

Areas for Improvement for Primary School

- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to strengthen approaches to planning for improvement. As they do so they should involve all stakeholders in evaluating the work of the school.
- Senior leaders and teachers should develop further their approaches to provide consistently high-quality learning and teaching in all classes. They should ensure that all children experience tasks and activities set at the right level of difficulty. This should provide appropriate challenge to children who can achieve more.
- As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop planning and assessment processes to meet the needs of all children and support them to make the best possible progress. This includes children who require additional support in learning.

Areas for Improvement for Nursery Class

- Structured professional development and reflective practice will support greater consistency in quality.
- Strengthening personal planning will support consistent responses to individual needs and wellbeing.
- Staff should further develop their skills in high quality interactions to support, challenge and extend children's learning.

Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings

Following publication of the inspection reports (see Appendix 3) and the Summarised Inspection Findings for the Primary School (see link below), the school's next Improvement Plan 2026/27 will reflect the areas for improvement identified by HMIE and Care Inspectorate and provide a clear strategic focus for related school improvement.

The following strengths and areas for improvement were highlighted within each of the quality indicators.

Craigiebarns Primary School

QI 1.3 - Leadership of change

- The headteacher, supported very well by the depute headteacher, provides effective leadership for the school. Together, they have gained the confidence of children, staff and parents. The headteacher leads the school community well in sustaining warm, caring and nurturing relationships amongst children, parents and staff. They fulfil the school vision of 'Learning, Growing and Achieving Together'. She worked together successfully with children, staff, parents and school partners to refresh the school values of 'RAISE' (Respect, Achieve, Include, Safe, Equal).
- The headteacher and staff consult with staff, parents, children and partners to identify improvement priorities for the school. In collaboration with the local authority, staff use improvement drivers well of presence, participation and progress. This ensures a whole school focus upon improving outcomes for children and families.
- Senior leaders and staff worked together to agree helpful policies and procedures to outline agreed school standards and expectations. They consider aspects such as the classroom environment, planning for learning, and positive relationships. This is helping teachers to improve children's experiences in most classes. For example, the recently introduced 'Jotter Standards' policy is helping children organise and present their learning better.
- The headteacher has developed and uses a comprehensive collegiate calendar. The headteacher protects time for all staff to engage in professional dialogue on learning and teaching, planning, tracking and monitoring. Linking this to school-wide quality assurance more effectively should help senior leaders ensure all new policies are implemented consistently and well in all classes.
- Staff engage regularly with continuous professional learning. Staff work effectively with the local authority pedagogy team and articulate well the impact this work is having on their classroom practice. They participate regularly in professional review conversations with the headteacher, linked to appropriate professional standards. Staff work together very well to embed teacher leadership further across the school.
- A significant number of children, across all stages, participate successfully in decision making groups such as school council, rights ambassadors, health and wellbeing leaders, eco leaders and reading warriors. They now effectively undertake responsibility for improving the work of the school. Staff, children and partners work together to agree priorities for these groups to improve children's experiences.
- The headteacher leads staff well to work very effectively with a wide range of local and national partners. These partnerships include cluster schools, the local further education college and sports groups and organisations. This offers children greater opportunities for wider achievement.
- All staff have strong understanding of the socio-economic context of the school. They know their children and families very well. This allows them to provide sensitive support for children and families who may face social and financial challenges. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) appropriately to provide additional staff who deliver targeted interventions for children who require additional support.

QI 2.3 - Learning, teaching and assessment

- Children understand the well-embedded school values. Children are well-mannered and welcoming to staff and visitors. Overall, children learn in a calm environment. At times, a few children become distracted and engage in low-level behaviour. This impacts negatively on their concentration and learning. When lessons are briskly paced and engaging, these children sustain their interest and engage more positively.
- Staff use a range of relevant contexts and teaching approaches well to motivate most children. Most children work successfully individually and interact well with peers when working in pairs and groups. In a minority of classes, children lead aspects of learning. Across the school, children are ready to take a greater role in leading their own learning.
- Teachers should ensure that all children are actively engaged in purposeful learning throughout the school day. Too often, children experience periods of time which lack a clear educational focus. Senior leaders and teachers should develop structures and processes to maximise learning time and help children achieve and attain more.
- High-quality learning and teaching are not yet consistent across all classes. In a majority of lessons, teachers do not yet consistently provide tasks, activities and resources that match well the learning needs of every child. Teachers are beginning to embed features of the recently agreed learning and teaching guidance in their classroom practice. They should now ensure all learning activities provide the right level of support and challenge for all children.

- Staff make effective use of digital technologies during lessons to support and enhance teaching. Across the school, children upload their work confidently to a digital platform, this supports them to share successful learning with their families. In a few classes, children who require additional support with their learning are well supported using digital technology. Staff should now build on this positive practice to enhance further children's use of digital technology when learning across the curriculum.
- Teachers are in the early stages of supporting children's learning through play. At early level, children experience a range of well-considered play opportunities to help them develop important skills, knowledge and understanding. Senior leaders and staff should work together to develop a consistent approach to play across the nursery and early primary stages.
- In most classes, teachers outline well the purpose of learning and offer supportive explanations. In most lessons, teachers create 'steps to success' and share these with children. A few teachers are beginning to develop these steps together with children. Teachers should ensure that steps for success are always relevant to the intended learning and are matched well to children's needs and abilities.
- In most classes, teachers use questioning well to help children link new and previous learning and to check children's understanding of how to complete learning tasks. A few teachers use open questions effectively to extend and deepen children's learning. Senior leaders should now ensure this effective practice is shared across all classes.
- Most teachers use a few formative assessment strategies to make accurate judgements about children's understanding. A few teachers use this information skilfully to adapt their teaching and children's learning activities. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding and use of formative assessment strategies to ensure that learning activities are well-matched to the needs of all children.
- All teachers give positive verbal feedback and encouragement to children. Most teachers provide brief written feedback on children's effort in a few curricular areas. Teachers should ensure that all feedback supports the intended learning and helps children understand clearly how they have been successful and what they need to do next. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular opportunities to engage in peer and self-assessment.
- Children are beginning to set short-term, personal targets in literacy and numeracy. These are supporting children to understand what they are learning and what they need to do next. Teachers should support all children to set and reflect upon their targets. This should help support high-quality learning conversations between children and teachers.
- The headteacher and staff have developed and implement a clear assessment calendar. This is helping teachers to ensure children experience a range of assessments in literacy and numeracy across the year. Teachers are using these increasingly well to evaluate and track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. As teachers develop further their understanding of highly effective assessment, they should consider how they will plan for assessment across the curriculum.
- Teachers are continuing to develop a shared understanding of national standards and expectations. They benefit from working closely with colleagues from other local schools to moderate children's learning, attainment and achievement. As a result, teachers' professional judgement of children's progress and achievement is becoming more robust and accurate.
- All teachers now use increasingly well a recently created online planning tool to plan learning across the curriculum. Teachers use local authority progression pathways and CfE outcomes and experiences to help support appropriate progression in children's learning. As planned, senior leaders and teachers now need to consider how assessment is integral to their planning of learning and teaching.
- Senior leaders meet teachers termly to monitor and discuss children's progress. Staff use these meetings to identify and plan targeted interventions for children. Senior leaders and teachers should now consider a wider range of evidence of children's progress in learning during these meetings. This should help plan and provide learning that leads to improved outcomes for children and accelerates their progress.

QI 3.1 - Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Staff in all roles work together well to promote and support children's wellbeing. Children benefit from positive relationships with adults and other children. The majority of children in P4-P7 say that other children treat them fairly and with respect.
- Children are developing their understanding of their own and others' wellbeing. Most children have an awareness of wellbeing indicators and discuss successfully how these relate to their lives. A few children used the indicators recently to evaluate their own wellbeing with an adult who knows them well. Teachers should continue to support children to build on their understanding of wellbeing and to practise applying related knowledge and skills.

- Most children talk about ways that they know how to keep safe at home, online and in the community. Almost all children feel safe at school and state that they have a trusted adult that they can talk to if they feel worried.
- Most children are well-behaved in class and in the playground. Almost all children name and use well a few strategies or tools to cope with strong emotions. A few children regulate their emotions with staff in a smaller, quiet room when they feel upset or want further support. They find this nurturing approach helpful. As planned, all staff should now deepen and apply consistently wellbeing related professional learning.
- Children are developing their understanding of children's rights well. They talk confidently about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and are aware of an increasing number of the rights. Older children understand and articulate why it is important for children to have rights. Senior leaders should support children, parents and staff to review and refine the school's positive relationship policy to align with this work.
- All children now have a range of wellbeing supports available in classrooms. A few children benefit regularly from these when they are upset. An increasing number of children now receive targeted support within their classroom and alongside peers. In a few classes, teachers are applying knowledge from professional learning well which supports children to feel included and engage in class learning. For example, a few children are now better at regulating their behaviour and emotions when in class. However, inclusive practice is not yet of a consistent quality across the school. All staff need to develop inclusive practice further to improve outcomes for all children.
- Almost all children understand the importance of being active and making healthy choices. Staff should continue to support children's regular participation in sports and physical activity. This should help children to build confidence, social skills, and form healthy habits.
- Senior leaders and staff promote and raise children's awareness of anti-bullying messages and events at assemblies and in lessons. A few children, parents and staff feel that current approaches to address unkind and bullying behaviours could be improved further. Senior leaders should support the school community to revisit and develop further the school's anti-bullying policy and approaches.
- Senior leaders and staff meet their statutory duties in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. They understand and fulfil their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and meeting the additional support needs of learners.
- Senior leaders and staff know children and their families well and recognise individual challenges and barriers to learning. Support staff have positive relationships with children and provide care and encouragement. They use knowledge from training when helping children practise key skills in learning.
- A few children who require additional support with their learning need improved individualised support and planning to better meet their needs. As planned, the headteacher needs to clearly define roles and responsibilities for all staff involved in supporting children who require additional support with their learning.
- Senior leaders and staff work with education colleagues well to provide specialist input and support for children with visual impairment and those who have English as an additional language. Children who are young carers receive regular support which helps them to feel connected and more confident with their learning. Staff should continue to identify and address further any barriers to participation.
- Across the school, children are developing their awareness and understanding of diversity. They explore a range of themes through assemblies, project-based learning and health and wellbeing programmes. Staff should continue to develop all children's understanding of equalities and diversity across the school and wider community.

QI 3.2 - Raising attainment and achievement

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Most children in P1, P4 and P7 are achieving nationally expected CfE levels.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is good. Across all stages, a minority of children are capable of achieving more. All children should be supported further to develop subject-specific mathematical language.

Attainment over time

- Levels of CfE attainment in literacy and numeracy have remained steady over recent years. There is a slight dip in the number of children attaining first level by the end of P4. Senior leaders analyse appropriately attainment data over time for groups and cohorts. Senior leaders and staff now use attainment information increasingly well to plan targeted interventions. They now need to ensure that strategies and interventions to raise attainment are robustly evaluated.
- The school's overall attendance rate is 95.4%, which is above the national and local average. A few children have attendance of less than 90%. The headteacher monitors systematically the attendance of these children. She identifies barriers to attendance and works effectively with families, family support workers and teachers to support families. This impacts positively on these children, resulting in sustained, increasing levels of attendance.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff value children's achievements and share these through assemblies, achievement books and displays. Most children participate in a range of sports activities which support them to be healthy and develop skills in physical activity. As a result of this work, the school has been recognised through local and national awards and accreditation. A few children participate in sports at a national level and are rightly proud of their success. Staff should consider how to celebrate and encourage a greater range of children's achievements.
- Staff have developed a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs which reflect the range of children's interests. Senior leaders track children's participation in clubs and activities in and out of school. They use this information well to plan opportunities for children who are at risk of missing out. As a next step, senior leaders and staff should help children to recognise and discuss more clearly the skills they are developing through their achievements.
- Senior leaders and staff understand the socio-economic context of the school and local community well. They use their knowledge to inform plans to address inequity. This includes a clear approach to reducing the cost of the school day. Senior leaders monitor children's attendance on excursions and outdoor residential experiences closely so that no child misses out due to financial circumstances. Senior leaders signpost families experiencing financial hardship to local community partners such as 'Dundee Bairns.' As a result, children and families feel supported and included in the school community.

Key activity to date has included the following:

In Craigiebarns Primary School

- The Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher have carried out professional support visits in the last two weeks. They have created a rubric to ensure consistency following the feedback from HMIE and have used this to give clear, actionable and specific next steps to all teachers.
- Teachers are currently taking part in reciprocal visits across our 'School Improvement Partnership' schools, this will further develop approaches to consistency with regards to learning and teaching.
- To ensure inclusive practice is of a consistent quality across the school all staff have attended a decider skills training session with CAMHS. This training focused on self-regulation and understanding how to support children to manage their emotions. In addition to this, all teachers and support staff are working alongside the school's educational psychologist to embed the standard for inclusive practice.
- A comprehensive assessment calendar is currently being developed which will be in place for the beginning of next session. This will build on the work already in place with hot and cold tasks and holistic assessments. This data-informed approach will inform differentiation to meet the needs of all children and support them to make the best possible progress in their learning.

Craigiebarns Primary School Priorities

- A new format of 'medium term planning' was part of the current school improvement plan and steps were under way to implement this. Feedback from the inspection has validated this approach and the school are ensuring this proceeds at pace. This acute focus on planning will provide more appropriate challenge for children who can achieve more and ensure children's interests are captured to further their engagement in learning.
- Further develop approaches to provide consistently high-quality learning and teaching in all classes, ensuring all children experience tasks and activities set at the right level of difficulty. This will provide appropriate challenge to children who can achieve more.

- Develop approaches to inclusive practice using the 'Dundee Standard of Inclusive Practice'. This will create an inclusive environment and provide differentiated learning which meets the needs of all children and ensures they are making appropriate progress with their learning.
- Develop a consistent approach to play across the nursery and early primary stages.
- School staff will continue with planned improvement activities for the remainder of this school session as agreed by HM Inspectors
- The Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher are in the process of reviewing the school's self-evaluation to ensure that the School Improvement Plan (2026/27) has a focus on embedding current policy and practice, with the aim of providing consistently high-quality learning and teaching in all classes.

Craigiebarns Nursery Class

QI: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

- The promotion of positive values, respectful interactions and play experiences promote children's confidence, wellbeing and development and allow children to develop relationships and social and emotional skills in a supportive environment.
- Daily routines support children to develop resilience, responsibility, and independence.
- Staff should continue to develop varied strategies to deepen thinking and encourage discussion and child-led learning.
- Mandatory training for staff had been undertaken, and learning was being effectively applied to maintain safety and wellbeing and was contributing to improved practice.
- A structured professional development plan should be developed to support greater consistency and confidence across the team.
- Effective self-evaluation has supported improved experiences in numeracy, and this approach should now be applied across other areas of learning.
- Monitoring staff skills and evaluation of completed training should now be undertaken.
- Staff collaboration and sharing of practice supports professional development, and to build on this strength, written reflection logs linked to actions will support continuous improvement.
- Children's rights are promoted, in line with UNCRC and Health and Social Care Standards, and children show growing awareness and informed decision-making.
- Staffing levels, deployment, clear communication, and flexible teamwork support positive outcomes for children.

QI Learning, teaching and assessment

- Due to the provision of clear, consistent routines, caring and respectful relationships and use of effective strategies for support, children feel valued, safe and secure.
- Effective use is made of the extensive, outdoor learning space where children develop their creativity and engage purposefully to enhance their learning.
- Children's rights underpin the work of the setting.
- Children hold leadership roles within nursery which supports understanding of the importance of responsibility and safety.
- Effective use is made of the local community, and staff also facilitate intergenerational learning with community members. The real-life experiences deepen children's learning and knowledge of their local community.
- Staff interactions are warm, friendly, and attuned to children's individual needs.
- Staff should further develop their skills in high quality questioning and interactions to support, challenge and extend children's learning.
- Staff closely observe and record children's learning experiences and use assessment information to plan future learning experiences.
- Staff should now ensure children's learning and next steps are documented consistently.
- Staff plan children's learning against national curriculum experiences and outcomes and use an effective blend of responsive and intentional approaches which increasingly demonstrate a focus on children's rights.
- Children's learning is tracked using local authority guidance, and the information is used to plan targeted support.

QI Nurturing Care and Support

- Children experience responsive care and secure attachments which create an environment where children feel valued, respected, and enabled to engage in learning.
- Staff interactions upheld children's rights and prioritised their wellbeing.
- Children demonstrate understanding of safety and risk awareness.
- Personal care routines maintain dignity, privacy and reassurance, including during times of transition throughout the nursery day.
- Lunchtime routines promote independence, healthy choices, and development of social skills.
- Although personal plans are regularly reviewed with families, staff should now add more structure to plans and assess children's needs in more detail.
- Children requiring additional support have plans in place, created and reviewed in collaboration with parents and carers.
- A well-planned programme of family engagement activities strengthened family involvement in the life of the nursery and supported continuity of learning between home and nursery.

QI Children's Progress

- Staff place a strong emphasis on the health and wellbeing of children and as a result, most children demonstrate confidence, responsibility, and independence in daily routines.
- Most children make good progress across almost all areas of their learning and development.
- Some children are capable of making greater progress and staff should build meaningfully on children's prior learning to ensure meaningful progress for all.
- Most children are developing their early numeracy and mathematics skills well through a wide range of well-planned learning experiences.
- Staff value, recognise and celebrate children's achievements in nursery and families are encouraged to share success and learning from home.
- Staff should now use the information provided from home to inform planning and support sustained progress in learning.
- Staff support families sensitively and respectfully, and have a good understanding of the socio-economic, cultural and linguistic context in which families live.
- Staff collaborate effectively with partners to deliver a wide range of family learning experiences. Robust assessment information to measure impact of the initiatives should now be undertaken to improve outcomes for children.

Key activity to date has included the following:

- The Senior Early Years Practitioner led a staff development session to ensure full understanding of the inspection findings, including strengths and areas for improvement.
- The Senior Early Years Practitioner has worked in collaboration with the Nursery Teacher and the staff team to compile a detailed action plan to address the areas for improvement within the inspection report.
- Following whole team discussion, the action plan has been populated to include agreed actions to develop key areas of practice, namely:
 - Recording and monitoring the impact of professional learning
 - Staff training to promote skills in high quality questioning and interactions, child-led learning and documentation of learning.
 - Agreed staff Practice Standards to be updated.
 - Revision of approaches and structure of responsive and intentional planning for learning experiences.
 - Revision of the format and content of children's personal planning.
 - Parent Partnership Policy to be developed.

Craigiebarns Nursery Class Priorities

- A structured professional development plan should be developed to support greater consistency and confidence across the team.
- Monitoring of staff skills and evaluation of completed training should be undertaken.
- Introduce written reflection logs linked to professional learning to support continuous improvement.

- Staff should further develop their skills in high quality questioning and interactions to support, challenge and extend children's learning. This will further promote child-led learning.
- Staff should ensure children's learning and next steps are documented consistently.
- Although personal plans are regularly reviewed with families, staff should add more structure to plans and assess children's needs in more detail.
- Some children are capable of making greater progress and staff should build meaningfully on children's prior learning to ensure meaningful progress for all.
- Staff should use the information provided from home to inform planning and support sustained progress in learning.
- Robust assessment information to measure impact of family learning initiatives should now be undertaken to improve outcomes for children.

Full details of the Primary School Summary of Inspection Findings are available at:
[Craigiebarns Primary School summarised inspection findings, Dundee City Council 17/02/26](#)

Full details of inspection findings for the Nursery class are detailed in the report in Appendix 3.

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%

Audrey May
 Executive Director

Paul Fleming
 Chief Education Officer

Signed



Audrey May, Executive Director of Children and Families Service
Paul Fleming, Head of Service (Chief Education Officer)

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APPENDIX 3



17 February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2025, a team of HMIE inspectors visited Craigiebarns Primary School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Children across the school are happy, well-mannered and eager to learn. They are proud of the school. They exemplify very well the school values in their lives in school.
- Led by the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and children have established an effective culture of leadership across the school. Staff and children feel empowered to lead change.
- Senior leaders, staff and children work very effectively with a wide range of local and national organisations. These partnerships enhance and strengthen children's learning experiences.
- Children benefit from a range of opportunities to extend and deepen their wider achievement. Children develop important skills across a range of different contexts.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Dundee City Council.

- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to strengthen approaches to planning for improvement. As they do so they should involve all stakeholders in evaluating the work of the school.
- Senior leaders and teachers should develop further their approaches to provide consistently high-quality learning and teaching in all classes. They should ensure that all children experience tasks and activities set at the right level of difficulty. This should provide appropriate challenge to children who can achieve more.
- As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop planning and assessment processes to meet the needs of all children and support them to make the best possible progress. This includes children who require additional support in learning.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school \(4th edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are HMIE's evaluations for Craigiebarns Primary School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school (4th edition) Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the HMIE website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Dundee City Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Fraser Forsyth
HM Inspector

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland



Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

Craigiebarns Primary School Nursery

Dundee City Council
17 February 2026

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

Key inspection findings

- Staff were committed to children's wellbeing and learning. Structured professional development and reflective practice should support greater consistency in quality.
- Relationships across the nursery are strong. Staff know children and families very well. There is a welcoming, inclusive and caring ethos within the nursery.
- Children received respectful care that promoted emotional security and confidence. Strengthening personal planning should support consistent responses to individual needs and wellbeing.
- Staff work very well together to create well-resourced, stimulating, learning spaces indoors and outdoors. They should develop further their skills in high quality interactions to support, challenge and extend children's learning.



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



Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual information

Craigiebarns Primary School Nursery is situated in a separate building within the grounds of Craigiebarns Primary School in Dundee. There is a large playroom with direct access to outdoors. Children access 1140 hours of early learning childcare (ELC) between 8.30 am and 2.30 pm, five days a week, during term time. Parents can purchase additional hours outwith these times. The setting is registered for a maximum of 44 children, at any one time, aged three to those not yet attending primary school. There are currently 40 children on the roll.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery and is the named manager. The senior early years practitioner (SEYP) has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the setting. The wider team includes six early years educators and two early years support assistants. The setting has a nursery teacher for four days a week per fortnight.

Leadership: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff promoted children's confidence, wellbeing, and development through positive values and play experiences that encouraged respectful interactions. Most children engaged confidently in play, built relationships, and developed social and emotional skills, creating a secure and supportive environment.

Children were supported to develop resilience and independence during routines such as tidying after mealtimes and taking turns during play and group activities. These approaches fostered responsibility and cooperation among children. To build on this positive practice, staff could have used varied strategies like open-ended questions across learning experiences to deepen thinking and encourage discussion, strengthening higher-order thinking and child-led learning.

Staff had completed mandatory training, including child protection and first aid. They had applied this learning effectively to maintain safety and wellbeing. Support from health professionals had contributed to improved practice. Some staff were undertaking additional qualifications, while others engaged in fewer opportunities for training. A structured professional development plan could support greater consistency and confidence across the team, supporting enhanced high-quality learning experiences.

Self-evaluation processes successfully supported targeted training in numeracy, which led to improved experiences for children. Applying this approach across other areas of learning could have strengthened consistency in practice and promoted



improved outcomes for children. Monitoring of staff skills and evaluation of completed training could contribute to better alignment with service priorities.

Staff collaborated well in team meetings and shared practice with other services to support peer development. They explained how these discussions supported professional development and moderation of learning. To build on this strength, introducing written reflection logs linked to actions could have enhanced accountability and continuous improvement.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of guidance and legislation, including the UNCRC and Health and Social Care Standards. Children's rights were promoted through positive interactions and visible displays. Children were beginning to link these rights to health outcomes, showing growing awareness and informed decision-making.

Staffing levels and deployment had been well planned, providing continuity and predictability for children. Clear communication and flexible teamwork had supported positive outcomes. All staff were registered with relevant professional bodies and followed codes of practice. Monitoring of deployment and learning could enhance sustained quality and further support wellbeing and engagement in learning.

Overall, the setting demonstrated good practice across staff skills, knowledge, and deployment. Strengthening structured professional learning, embedding reflective processes, and focusing on measurable improvements could improve higher-quality experiences and better outcomes for children. The service has potential to build on its strengths and continue improving care and learning.

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

Staff provide clear, consistent routines that help children settle quickly and happily on arrival. They build caring and respectful relationships with children and use a range of effective strategies to support each child in managing their emotions. As a result, all children feel valued, safe, and secure, as they grow increasingly confident as they learn together.

Children make effective use of the extensive, purposeful outdoor learning space. They develop their creativity and curiosity well as they engage purposefully with natural resources to enhance their learning. All children develop independence and assess risk as they explore and sustain engagement in areas such as the mud kitchen, climbing apparatus and woodland space. Children's rights underpin the work of the setting. Staff have introduced a 'rights rabbit' to make these more meaningful and developmentally appropriate for children. All children have a leadership role within the setting for example, helping prepare snack, tidying the playroom and risk assessing outdoors. This supports children well to understand the importance of being responsible and staying safe.



Staff make effective use of the local community. They take children to the local library to explore a wider range of books. They regularly facilitate intergenerational learning as children plant and grow fruit and vegetables with community members. These high-quality, real-life experiences build on children's learning and deepen their knowledge of their local community.

All staff interact with children in a warm, friendly manner and remain attuned to their individual needs. Most staff use well-considered questioning and commentary to support children's knowledge, however, this practice is not consistent. This results in missed opportunities to enhance learning. All staff should develop further their skills in high quality interactions to support, challenge and extend children's thinking and learning.

Children access a wide range of digital technologies, including an interactive whiteboard, cameras, and programmable toys. Staff should support all children to use these tools effectively to extend learning.

Staff observe children closely and record their learning and achievements. They share this information with parents through an online platform and learning journals. Staff use this assessment information effectively to build a holistic view of each child and plan future learning opportunities. Staff should ensure children's significant learning and next steps are documented consistently. Staff may find it useful to engage in moderation activities to support further their judgments about children's progress.

Staff plan children's learning using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. They use an effective blend of responsive and intentional approaches which includes children's contributions and increasingly, a focus on children's rights. Staff use local authority tracking guidance and developmental milestones well to monitor and track children's progress in health and wellbeing, literacy, and numeracy. They use this information meaningfully to identify groups of children who require additional support. This targeted support results in children making continued progress in their learning.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced responsive care that supported wellbeing. They were safe, healthy, and most expressed their needs confidently. This approach promoted secure attachments and created an environment where children felt valued and respected, enabling engagement in learning.

Respectful relationships were evident throughout the setting, helping children feel emotionally secure and supported in their development. Staff interactions upheld



children's rights and prioritised wellbeing, contributing to positive emotional growth and trust in group settings.

Children showed understanding of safety through learning about 'SIMOA', the purple elephant, reinforcing personal safety messages effectively. These conversations strengthened risk awareness and decision-making skills, contributing to improved wellbeing outcomes for children.

Personal care routines maintained dignity, privacy, and reassurance. Transitions between activities, such as welcome time, group time, and mealtimes, were calm and predictable, reducing anxiety and building confidence.

Mealtimes followed Setting the Table nutritional guidance, with fresh water and milk available. Lunchtime routines promoted independence, healthy choices, and social development. These practices supported confidence and contributed to positive health outcomes, helping children develop healthy eating habits and social skills.

Personal planning for children was reviewed regularly with families. Staff could have included SHANARRI wellbeing indicators to structure plans and assess children's needs. Including these indicators would have shown how strategies improved children's safety, health, achievement, and overall development.

Children requiring additional support had updated plans that included parental input, improving collaboration and consistency. This supported clearer planning and strengthened progress and wellbeing.

Family engagement was supported through handovers, events, and newsletters. Initiatives such as Eat Well Play Well, the PEEP Learning Together programme, and stay-and-play sessions promoted family learning. These initiatives strengthened staff leadership and encouraged healthy lifestyles. Activities built on family strengths and helped families feel involved. This approach supported continuity of learning between home and the setting.

Community connections enriched learning by fostering intergenerational relationships and developing awareness of planting and growing fruit and vegetables. Children gained practical skills and an appreciation of healthy living and sustainability through these community experiences.

Overall, the setting demonstrated strengths in care and support that positively impacted most children's wellbeing and learning. Improving consistency in personal planning could have supported high-quality outcomes and enhanced wellbeing, placing the service well positioned for continued improvement.



Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Most children make good progress across almost all areas of their learning and development. However, there are children who are capable of making greater progress. Staff now need to build more effectively on children's prior learning and promote a positive attitude towards learning to ensure all children make meaningful progress.

Staff place a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing. Most children demonstrate confidence, responsibility and independence as they prepare snack. Children risk assess the environment and use a mind map to record how they would like areas within the playroom to look. Most children confidently share their knowledge of healthy food choices and understand the importance of physical exercise as they jump, run and climb on outdoor apparatus.

Most children develop their early numeracy and mathematical skills well. Children use resources such as measuring tapes and rulers appropriately during block play as they plan and design structures. Most children confidently recognise colours and identify numerals to 10 and beyond in the environment. Most children access the well-planned and purposeful art area independently as they blend colours to paint and create models. Most children can write their own name and other words for a purpose. Children develop their fine motor skills very well as they use scissors and mark make with confidence, their drawings show increased detail.

Staff value, recognise and celebrate children's achievements in the setting. They encourage families to share children's success and new learning from home. As identified, staff need to make this valuable information from home more explicit. Staff should use this information meaningfully to inform planning and support sustained progress in learning.

Staff understand the socio economic, cultural and linguistic context in which families live. They support families sensitively and respectfully. Staff collaborate effectively with partners to deliver a wide range of initiatives for example, the importance of health eating and early literacy. Staff now need to gather more robust assessment information to measure the impact of these strategies and to identify gaps more clearly and improve outcomes for children.

Safeguarding (HMIE)

- Inspectors discussed safeguarding and child protection information provided by the ELC setting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. 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.

Fraser Forsyth

Eileen McColgan

HM Inspector

Care Inspector