

# Summarised inspection findings

Wallyford Primary School Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

21 November 2023

## Key contextual information

Wallyford Primary School Nursery is located in purpose-built accommodation within the school building. Each of the four spacious playrooms includes toilets and a fully fitted changing room. The four playrooms have shared access to a large indoor open area and an extensive outdoor garden. The newly appointed headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. A deputy headteacher and a nursery manager both have a 0.3 full time equivalent commitment to the nursery. A senior early years practitioner, 11 early years practitioners and three early years support workers make up the staff team. In the last two years, changes in the staffing have included 12 practitioners new to the nursery. Children can access their 1140 hours by attending for two full days (Monday/Tuesday or Wednesday/Thursday), and every second Friday. The nursery is open from 8.15 am to 5.45 pm. Parents can choose three different drop-off times and three different collection times each day. However, the majority of parents opt for 9am-3pm to match the primary school day. As a result, many children are not receiving their full entitlement of time.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

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

- Almost all children are happy and settled. Staff support children well who are new to the nursery to help them become familiar with their new environment. A majority of children engage well with the experiences which staff provide. Staff encourage children to make choices in their play. Practitioners have developed positive and nurturing relationships with children and are highly responsive to their wellbeing needs. The calm and supportive environment enables children to explore freely and grow in confidence.
- Children have free-flow access from playrooms to the outdoor environment. Practitioners have developed well-resourced outdoor spaces which promote children's learning and development. Children engage in activities enthusiastically and have space and time to explore open-ended natural materials. They access the tool bench, play tennis and use loose parts to develop their physical skills.
- Practitioners provide interesting learning spaces within the playrooms. However, patterns of staff deployment, where staff are allocated to particular areas, occasionally lead to missed opportunities to develop and extend children's learning. Where practice is best, staff interactions include open-ended questions, explanations and rich vocabulary which support children's learning. This good practice is not consistent across the playrooms.
- Staff mostly plan across all the curriculum areas in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) at early level. Staff should now make more effective use of all the spacious indoor accommodation to offer children a broader range of experiences, including activities involving digital technologies. This additional breadth will avoid duplicating activities across rooms and better support children's curiosity, skills in observation, creativity and investigation.

- Practitioners use a wide range of approaches to assess children’s learning. However, they are not yet fully effective in using this valuable information to plan future learning and next steps for children. The quality of staff’s observations is inconsistent, with varying quality and approaches, and their records do not fully capture evidence of children’s learning. Senior leaders recognise that practitioners would benefit from further support and guidance.
- Practitioners meet regularly to plan children’s learning and discuss their interests. Staff are gaining in confidence in gathering information for children’s learning folders. Although the playrooms have identical play spaces and planning arrangements, there is scope to ensure that learning contexts more closely recognise and match children’s ideas and interests.
- Practitioners currently use an online tracking system to record assessments of children’s broad progress through CfE early level experiences and outcomes. There is scope to review and refine the current approaches to observation, planning, tracking and monitoring. This will be more manageable for staff, supporting them to personalise learning and teaching to meet each child’s unique learning needs.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning and development. A significant number of children are ready for greater challenge in their learning in literacy and numeracy.
- Most children listen well to adults and to simple instructions. They enjoy talking to their friends and discussing their play activities together. Most children show interest in books and enjoy developing a story of the week using 'small world characters.' A majority of children can recognise their name in print, and a few are beginning to write it. Practitioners should offer more exemplars at the writing area to encourage children's skills further. They should make more use of simple non-fiction books across the nursery areas. This will encourage children to use books to find information and help them develop ideas in their play spaces.
- Children are developing their awareness of number and early mathematical concepts through play activities and daily routines. Most are learning to sort, count and match sets of objects. They explore concepts of 'heavier than' and 'lighter than' using balance scales. Children would benefit from access to a wider range of mathematical materials, including timers, calculators, money and solid shapes. This would support them to develop their knowledge and understanding of a wider range of mathematical concepts.
- Children are progressing well in their understanding of health and wellbeing. Regular emotional 'check ins' help children to identify their feelings. Practitioners support children to use a range of strategies to manage more challenging emotions calmly. While a majority of children play well together, a minority need additional support to form friendships, share resources and cooperate with others. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through celebrating a range of events on the nursery calendar.
- Practitioners should introduce more planned interventions at the end of the day to support children to refocus their energy and sustain their interest. Children participate in a dental health project and are aware of how to brush their teeth correctly. They enjoy helping to make vegetable soup and bread for snack time. They benefit from fresh air and exercise in the outdoor area. Children enjoy balancing on wooden beams, throwing and catching balls, and using a range of wheeled toys which is developing their gross motor skills successfully.

- Staff observe children at play and record evaluative comments. They add photographic evidence to their notes and include these in each child's learning story. Staff are not yet using assessment information to plan next steps for groups and individuals, or to track children's progress over time. Staff are aware of the need to recognise, record evidence and celebrate children's achievements more effectively. As an important part of children's development, staff should involve them more in talking about themselves as learners and help them to set their own simple learning targets.
- Staff know children and families well and share a good understanding of any challenges they may be facing. They work effectively with specialist agencies to ensure children and families are well supported.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.