

Summarised inspection findings

Kirkhill Nursery School

West Lothian Council

23 January 2024

Key contextual information

Kirkhill Nursery School is situated adjacent to Kirkhill Primary School. Within this academic year, the nursery school will move into a purpose-built nursery class within the school. The setting is registered for 40 children at any one time. There are currently 48 children on the roll. Early learning and childcare (ELC) placements are available for children from the age of two until starting primary school. Children can attend on a part-time basis, which includes morning and afternoon sessions, and full days. The nursery is open for 50 weeks of the year.

The nursery school and primary school are managed by the same headteacher. The headteacher has delegated leadership of the nursery school to the deputy headteacher. The acting early years officer supports the day-to-day running of the setting. Outwith term time, the local authority ELC area support manager provides management cover for the setting. She also provides additional support on a weekly basis to develop and improve practice. The headteacher has overall responsibility of the leadership and management of the nursery school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

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

- Practitioners have strong relationships with children, families, and each other which helps children to settle well and feel secure. Children play well and interact positively with each other. A few children require support to engage in play experiences, share resources and take turns.
- Practitioners have a good understanding of how young children learn. They plan the environment carefully within the unique layout of the building and develop spaces and routines well. This supports all children to independently follow their interests, indoors and outdoors. All children have opportunities to engage with mark-making, role-play, woodworking, block and exploratory play and sensory experiences. They share stories with their peers and adults daily. Children navigate the environment confidently, sharing their thoughts and ideas with friends and adults.
- Most children engage well in experiences with the majority concentrating for extended periods of time, for example, in physical play outdoors. Practitioners plan well a balance of child-led and adult-directed activities which support children's learning in literacy and numeracy. Children enjoy exploring real-life materials in the home corner but would benefit from more open-ended and natural materials as a consistent feature across experiences. This should support children to think creatively and make decisions in their play. A few children would benefit from greater levels of challenge to deepen their learning.
- A key worker system is used within the setting. As a result, practitioners know individual children and their families well and are mostly sensitive, nurturing and caring in their interactions with children. They use simple instructions and vocabulary, symbols and visual

prompts as well as a key word sign-supported communication system based on British Sign Language. These approaches support well children's communication needs. Practitioners should share their practice in this area to continue to improve children's language skills. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop consistently high-quality approaches to questioning to extend children's learning.

- Children have access to digital technologies, for example, an interactive whiteboard. Practitioners should develop further how digital technologies are used to support and enhance children's learning.
- Practitioners plan learning that evolves from children's interests, balanced with experiences based on consultative planning. They value children's voice and capture this in floorbooks, responsive planning, observations and possible lines of development. Practitioners recognise the need to streamline planning and tracking. This should support them to identify more clearly how they plan for and extend learning across the ages and stages of children's development.
- Practitioners use helpful systems to check children's progress over time including local authority progress guidance. Practitioners capture most children's important developments in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They identify children's next steps in learning linked to local authority trackers. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the online learning journals by commenting or by sharing any learning or achievements from home. Practitioners support the individual needs of children well using identified strategies developed in consultation with parents. Practitioners should now gather observations across all curriculum areas to understand the broad range of skills children are developing and use this information to plan next steps in learning.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The setting 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 setting and the education authority.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

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

Children under three

- Toddlers develop confidence, independence and resilience because of the caring interactions of practitioners. They spend time looking at books, making lunch in the home corner and singing familiar songs. They are increasingly able to listen to and follow simple instructions. Toddlers enjoy exploring volume and shape through their play.

Children aged three to five

- Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They listen well and enjoy taking part in conversations with adults and their friends. Most children are developing their interest in early writing skills. They use mark-making skills across their play, with a few creating drawings with detail. Almost all children enjoy sharing stories with an adult, listening very well for sustained periods of time. They recognise their name during self-registration and snack. Children now need to develop their skills in rhyme and analogy by singing songs and playing rhyming games regularly through their play experiences.
- The majority of children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children create shapes and copy simple patterns with adult support. A few children recognise and order numerals to ten and are developing an understanding of simple addition. Children develop their skills in measure when baking and engaging in woodwork. They need support to use mathematical vocabulary such as positional language in other areas of their play. They do not yet gather and display information in simple ways.
- Almost all children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. Children are increasingly confident at assessing and managing risk during their play. Most children have well-developed balance and coordination. Children engage in conversations about healthy food choices. They self-serve and pour drinks during snack times and help clear away plates and cutlery at lunchtimes. All children should be supported to reflect on and talk about their feelings linked to relevant experiences.
- Senior leaders and practitioners use local authority trackers well to make judgements about children's progress. They recognise the need to capture more clearly the progress younger children make as a result of their nursery experiences. Practitioners link their observations of children's progress to tracked outcomes. Senior leaders and practitioners monitor the progress of individual children to identify any gaps in learning and to inform next steps. They use tracking information well to inform universal approaches to children's experiences. As planned,

senior leaders should support practitioners to develop their understanding of national standards further to support children to experience greater challenge in their learning.

- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements by displaying them on the 'achieving Archie' display. Senior leaders should now consider how practitioners can track the skills children are developing through their achievements, both in and outwith nursery.
- Senior leaders and practitioners proactively provide valuable support to families experiencing financial challenges. They plan regular family engagement events which help parents to understand how to support their child at home. Practitioners work closely with families and other professionals to implement interventions that improve children's communication skills and language acquisition. They reflect regularly on the environment and have developed literacy rich environments that support and extend children's vocabulary. Practitioners' use of symbols and visual cues is helping to meet the needs of children who require additional support in their learning. They use well information gathered from diagnostic assessments to improve children's expressive language skills. These approaches are increasing children's vocabulary well in relation to their age and stage of development.

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.