

# Summarised inspection findings

**Williamston Primary School Nursery Class**

West Lothian Council

5 December 2023

## Key contextual information

Williamston Primary School Nursery is accommodated in one large playroom within Williamston Primary School. Children have easy access to a secure garden space and nearby woodlands. The nursery provides 1140 hours over 50 weeks for children aged three to those not yet attending school from 7:47 a.m. till 6:14 p.m. The nursery is registered for 48 children at any one time. Almost all children reside within the upper deciles of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The current roll is 60. Children attend either morning, afternoon or full-day sessions. There have been significant changes in staffing. Just over half of the staff team are new to post this session. There are 11 practitioners in the nursery. Four have recently been appointed. The nursery is managed on a day-to-day basis by the early years officer (EYO) under the leadership of the depute headteacher and the headteacher. The early learning and childcare area support manager (ELCASM) supports on a weekly basis. The depute headteacher was appointed in January 2020. COVID-19 had a detrimental impact due to disrupted learning and changes to playroom organisation whilst keeping children safe.

### 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

- All practitioners have nurturing relationships with children and support children's needs well. Children feel safe and secure and enjoy exploring the indoors and outdoors through the caring interactions they have with practitioners. Almost all children engage well with varied resources and experiences in the attractive indoor and outdoor environments. Most children are motivated and are developing well important skills across all aspects of learning. A few children need greater challenge when learning. Almost all children play enthusiastically both indoors and outdoors, exploring what is on offer. Most are becoming independent and curious learners who enjoy taking responsibility. Most are learning key life skills, including food preparation and dressing appropriately for the weather. Children are developing an awareness of their rights through practitioners' helpful work with them on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A few parents report that children refer to these at home.
- Children like when their interests and views are taken account of. Children respond well when they make choices and decisions about their learning based on their interests. These include outdoor challenges. Younger children and those who are new are supported sensitively and effectively by adults who encourage them to engage appropriately in routines and various learning experiences. A few children use digital technologies well to enhance their learning. Practitioners have identified correctly the need to develop children's digital skills further.
- Practitioners interact well with children. Practitioners' professional learning in child development is enhancing children's learning, for example in helping children's progress in early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing. Most are improving how they use questions to check children's understanding. They now need to build on this positive work to

further children's learning and thinking, particularly for those who need greater challenge. Most use their initiative well when interacting with children. A few need to be more confident in using their initiative to support children's progress as spontaneous opportunities occur during play.

- Practitioners' review of their planning is helping them to provide meaningful experiences for children. They adapt planned play experiences well in response to what children enjoy and request. They are exploring and developing different ways of involving parents more through using information on children's experiences and interests from home when planning. Parents value the support they receive from nursery practitioners and opportunities, such as 'stay and play' sessions to find out more about their children's learning and progress.
- Practitioners work well together to exchange information about children's learning regularly. Senior leaders have introduced more regular opportunities for discussions with practitioners about individual children's learning and progress. Keyworkers record helpful observations of children's participation in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners recognise the need to develop and improve the quality of observations to reflect fully children's experiences and skills across all aspects of learning. They need to continue to ensure judgements of children's progress are robust and next steps are meaningful and ambitious. As a team, practitioners have meetings to discuss children's learning. However, they need to develop ways of discussing and analysing observations gathered over time for each child.

## 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.

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 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

### Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing

- Almost all children make good progress in health and wellbeing in line with their stage of development. Most are independent and understand how to have good personal hygiene. Almost all are respectful. A few need to improve their skills in turn taking and sharing. Almost all children know how to assess risk when outdoors.
- Most children make good progress in early language and communication and use skills across different areas of the nursery. Most listen well to adults and each other and ask questions to find out information. Most children are developing confidence in explaining their thinking about matters which interest them. The majority are interested in books. A few choose to 'read' on their own for different purposes. Most children explore sounds, letters and words. Most are developing skills in 'writing' through mark making. A few write words with confidence. A few children are capable of further progress.
- Most children make good progress in mathematics and numeracy. Most children can count within 10 and a few beyond 10. Most sort, group and order natural items outdoors. They talk confidently about seasonal changes. Most children are developing a good understanding of measuring concepts. They are confident in measuring and weighing. All children gain an early awareness of data handling by registering themselves at snack and lunch. Children need to develop further their skills in numeracy and mathematics through meaningful and real-life experiences.

### Children's progress over time

- Overall, most children make good progress in health and wellbeing, communication, early language and numeracy and mathematics in line with their stage of development. Nursery leaders support practitioners to track and analyse data to ensure children's continued progress. Senior leaders recognise the need to streamline existing systems and include information on children's progress over time across all curricular areas in line with their stage of development.

### Overall quality of children's achievement

- Children's achievements within and outwith the nursery are celebrated well. Most are developing a range of helpful skills in line with their stage of development. Children are developing their citizenship skills well through contacts with a local care home. Most are becoming self-reliant and resilient. Children are acquiring relevant skills for learning, life and work, including being team members. They are gaining appropriate skills in health and wellbeing and developing an understanding of their rights. Children are aware of their

achievements through the school's 'Fill a bucket' initiative. Children need to continue to develop an awareness of skills gained through wider achievements. Nursery leaders should build on this work to ensure that the skills children achieve through participating in a range of activities are effectively tracked and analysed to provide evidence of the totality of children's achievements.

### **Ensuring equity for all children**

- Practitioners know the social and economic contexts of children and families. They take action to remove any barriers including continually reviewing the cost of the nursery day and by working effectively with education and health partners. As a result individual children are supported appropriately through targeted interventions, particularly in literacy. In particular, they are focused on and being successful at helping children to develop further communication and language skills through specific play activities. Most children who have specific needs linked to their stage of development make good progress through practitioners' increasing knowledge of child development.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were nurtured by staff through warm and fun interactions. Children's cues were responded to and supported with compassion and respect. Parents felt staff were loving and caring towards their children and the wider family. As a result, children and families had developed positive and meaningful attachments with the service.

Mealtimes were positive, unhurried experiences that promoted children's independence and choices. Staff understood the importance of mealtimes being social and enjoyable experiences. Snack choices were nutritious and reflected current guidance, which supported children's health and wellbeing.

Opportunities to maximise children's wellbeing in relation to sleep and rest, could be further developed. Children would benefit from the introduction of cosy and safe spaces that could be used for this purpose. For some children further information should be gathered to help staff effectively and sensitively plan for their sleep and comfort needs. This is to ensure children develop positive sleep habits that promote their wellbeing and safety.

Staff supported children well with personal care providing guidance and nurture. However, the arrangements for privacy and dignity within the toilet space needed addressed. The lack of an entrance door meant there was potential for children's privacy to be compromised. The layout did not align with good practice guidance in relation to minimising the spread of infection in early learning and childcare services. The setting should collaborate with the local authority and other partner agencies to address this in line with good practice (see area for improvement 1).

Staff knew children well and worked alongside parents to provide continuity of care. Improvements had been made to personal planning approaches enabling staff to consider and plan for children's needs. The service should continue to monitor personal planning approaches to ensure they include clear strategies of support that are effectively evaluated over time. This is to ensure staff can continue to respond quickly and sensitively to children's needs.

Required medication was available in the service meaning children could be provided with treatment when needed. Most staff were knowledgeable about health and medication needs helping to keep children safe. The service had developed practices in line with Care Inspectorate guidance and the local authority policy highlighted the specific procedures for early learning and childcare settings. There were some gaps in the reviewing of medication forms, which should be addressed to ensure consistency and clarity.

**Care Inspectorate evaluation: good**

### 1.3 Play and learning

An enabling play environment motivated children to be curious in their play. They had good opportunities to explore real-life items and open-ended materials that sparked their interest. Opportunities for children to explore literacy and numeracy were embedded throughout the play spaces, supporting them to practice skills and consolidate learning. As a result, children were meaningfully involved in a balance of stimulating experiences.

Throughout the day, children experienced extended periods of free flow play in the garden. They enjoyed exploring creative ideas in the mud kitchen and experimented with tools. These experiences enabled children to be creative and develop their critical thinking skills.

Children's learning was enhanced through regular connections to their own and wider communities. For example, the service had developed links with a local care home, where children enjoyed visiting the residents. Daily woodland walks provided children with additional outdoor experiences. These experiences helped children to develop confidence and explore new skills within the world around them.

Staff listened to children and responded with enthusiasm, showing children that their play and thoughts were valued. Some staff were confident in extending children's thinking and widening their skills through interactions and discussions. However, at times, there were opportunities for staff to develop these interactions to meet children's individual learning needs. For example, staff frequently used daily routines to explore numeracy but on some occasions the child's stage of development and learning needed a different approach. Developing consistent, effective interactions to support learning was a development area for staff.

## Care Inspectorate evaluation : good

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A shared ethos across the leadership team and staff supported children and families to have positive and enabling experiences. Families felt valued, which helped foster positive partnerships between home and the service. The service had identified the need to further extend parents involvement in their children's learning. Most parents waited in the cloakroom to collect their children; however, the leadership team and staff were beginning to consider more flexible approaches to inviting parents into the service to see their children and be involved in their experiences. The leadership team were confident this could be addressed by building on staff confidence and working with families to agree a planned approach.

Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement plans were in place and these processes were leading to improvements. The staff and leadership team demonstrated their ability and capacity to recognise what worked well and what needed to improve. A particular strength in relation to improvement planning had been the development of the enabling and interesting play environment.

Staff had some opportunities to reflect on their work and received feedback that enabled them to develop as practitioners. This was supporting improvements to children's experiences.

Distributed leadership roles were leading to positive changes and staff were enthusiastic and committed to taking forward these roles to benefit children. Moving forward, the setting should continue to build on these approaches to enable practitioners to work together to embed improvements across the service.

There were several processes and systems in place to support quality assurance, some of which had led to direct improvements. For example, environmental audits related to good practice guidance had supported children's play and learning experiences. Some of the quality assurance processes should now be reviewed to consider if they are purposeful and meaningful. For example, further developing the approach to quality assuring children's personal plans to ensure the strategies of support are consistently and meaningfully reviewed.



## Care Inspectorate evaluation : good

### Area for improvement 1:

To ensure children's privacy and dignity is respected and to minimise the potential for infection spreading, adjustments should be made to the toilet facilities to ensure a door is in place.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'If I require personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected' (HSCS 1.4) and 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17). This is to ensure the environment is consistent with Space to Grow: Design guidance for early learning and childcare and out of school care settings. (Scottish Government, 2017).

## 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.