

# Summarised inspection findings

**Maxholme Nursery School**

East Dunbartonshire Council

10 September 2024

## Key contextual information

Maxholme Nursery School is a funded provider working in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in the Bearsden area. The nursery is registered for 34 children at any one time and caters for children aged two years to those not yet attending school. Children attend from Bearsden, Milngavie, and the Glasgow City Council area. The nursery also provides funded places for children aged two years who are eligible for 1140 hours of ELC. There are currently 41 children on the roll. Children attend morning or full day between 8.45 am and 2.45 am daily, during term time. There are ten members of staff including the manager, deputy manager, six practitioners, a support worker, and a trainee practitioner.

The nursery, founded in 1968, is run by a voluntary management committee of parents and is a registered charity. The nursery moved to the current premises, Brookwood Villa, formerly a public library, in August 2023 and expanded in size, including increased staffing. The committee of parents, with the nursery team, are the anchor tenants of Brookwood Villa. The Trust who manage the building also allow other charities to rent the villa out with nursery hours, providing their needs fit with the local community and charitable purposes. The building consists of two playrooms and an attractive outdoor space.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
<p>This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community</li><li>■ strategic planning for continuous improvement</li><li>■ implementing improvement and change</li></ul>	

- The manager, working with the parent management committee and practitioners, has successfully led significant change over the last year. This includes the move to new premises and expansion of the team. As a team they demonstrate a commitment to the continued development of the nursery. They have reviewed the vision, values, and aims to ensure that they better reflect the aspirations of children, parents, and practitioners in the new Maxholme Nursery community. They have carefully ensured that working in partnership with families is key to this vision. Practitioners role model the values of respect, honesty, kindness, and friendship in their interactions with children, families and each other. They should continue to share the values in meaningful and relevant ways with all children.
- The manager recognises the strengths and development needs of the nursery and understands what is important for ongoing improvement. She encourages and supports practitioners to develop leadership skills by providing opportunities to lead improvements and share in the leadership of change. All practitioners have responsibility for aspects of leadership. This includes numeracy and developing aspects such as children's rights and nurture. These developments are beginning to have impact. Positive examples include the development of the garden and children learning about sustainability. Practitioners are now ready to undertake increased leadership responsibility that impacts positively on children's experiences while also building their own confidence and expertise. The new role of the deputy manager continues to evolve. The management committee is also keen to develop its role further. It will be important that the leadership roles and responsibilities of individuals are

defined to ensure clear accountability. Working in this way will increase capacity for improvement and improve the pace of change.

- Practitioners work increasingly well as a team. They are becoming reflective in their practice and use mind maps and audit tools to help record what is working well and what needs to improve. To ensure continuous improvement, the manager and practitioners should ensure there is a clear focus on developing consistent approaches across all aspects of the nursery. It would be helpful for them to look outwards to other settings to motivate and inspire continued developments. They should reflect on developments and improvements regularly to ensure they are effective, and the pace of change is sustained. Practitioners support children to reflect on the quality of the nursery in developmentally appropriate ways. There is capacity for children to be more involved in improvements, to share the process and leadership of change.
- The manager appreciates the support and helpful advice offered by representatives of East Dunbartonshire Council. This has supported the development of a planned approach to self-evaluation, including increased use of formal self-evaluation tools. The manager should develop this further to include a programme of ongoing monitoring of important aspects of the nursery. The manager should work with practitioners to develop their understanding and use of self-evaluation tools. This will support them, working together, to identify future priorities for improvement.

## 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

- Practitioners have nurturing and positive relationships with children. They are developing their understanding of children's rights and beginning to introduce this to children. Children are confident and make independent choices in their play, exploring indoors and outdoors. This is beginning to support them to lead their own learning. Practitioners have developed interesting spaces for children to learn. They should continue to develop a high-quality environment and ensure children's access to all spaces over the day. This includes exploring options to offer free flow to the outdoors. Practitioners should also increase opportunities for children to develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Almost all children are enthusiastic and curious learners. The majority of children engage well with experiences and resources. Children particularly enjoy experiences that challenge their thinking and skills. Practitioners should ensure that all children experience appropriate pace and challenge in their learning. This should support children to extend and sustain their engagement.
- Practitioners know and understand children as individuals. Most practitioner's interactions with children are calm and promote self-esteem. Practitioners should continue to develop how they use interactions, including questioning and commentary, to support, enhance and extend children's learning. Children access only a limited range of digital technologies. Practitioners should increase their use of digital technologies to enrich and support children's learning.
- Practitioners use an online platform to share observations of children's progress with families. These include photographs and 'moments' of children's learning experiences. The manager should work with practitioners to enhance their skills in observing and recording significant learning for each child. Practitioners record children's learning in detailed floor books which effectively feature the voice of the children. They could develop this further to provide a tool for children to be more involved in documenting and reflecting upon their learning.
- Practitioners plan for children's learning to ensure coverage of experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence. They are responsive to children's ideas and interests, such as recently supporting children to explore space and planets. Practitioners identify what children need to learn next. They should develop consistent ways to record next steps in learning to allow children's progress to be measured more accurately. The manager uses a range of tools to ensure children make progress across their learning. As practitioners develop their skills in observing and assessing learning the measurement of children's progress should become more accurate and useful. This will also allow the identification of where children may require additional challenge. Children who require additional support to help them learn have bespoke plans in place. Practitioners need to ensure that learning targets are clearly focused on what children need to learn and progress children make can be easily measured.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners provide play-based experiences in all areas of the curriculum. The parent management committee and manager have recently developed a curriculum rationale. This is to be shared with all stakeholders for consultation and further development. The rationale should have a focus on developing a shared and understood curriculum offer that meets the needs of children attending the nursery. Practitioners should ensure it takes full account of curriculum design principles and national guidance.
- Practitioners plan transitions into and within the nursery well. They are sensitive to the needs of individual children and their families as they begin nursery or move playroom. Parents appreciate the individualised arrangements to support the needs of children and families.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and practitioners have strong partnerships with parents and carers. The management committee of parents plays a very active role in business decisions, working effectively with practitioners to develop the nursery. Families are aware of the different levels of involvement they can have. Everyone is invited to be part of their child's nursery experiences in a range of ways and parents are appreciative of these. They welcome regular information about learning and routines provided using an online platform. Parents enjoy 'stay and play' opportunities, helping on outings and social events. Senior leaders should ensure they maximise the skill set of the parental body to support the ongoing development of the nursery.
- Practitioners have developed a range of partnerships that support and enhance children's experiences. Intergenerational links, for example with a local care home, provide children with purposeful opportunities to be part of their community. Regular use is made of the local area to support learning, for example visits to Roman Baths and a nearby loch. Practitioners also proactively signpost and refer to other professionals who provide support and guidance to families.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

**satisfactory**

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Positive relationships are a strength of the nursery. Practitioners have trusting relationships with children and families. There are long-standing connections to the nursery and a strong sense of pride in its place in the local community. This contributes to the sense of wellbeing promoted for children, families, and staff. Practitioners value each child as a unique individual and encourage children to develop their sense of identity. Most practitioners are positive role models for children. Children are developing social skills, including turn-taking and sharing, in age-appropriate ways. With the children, practitioners have developed a simple charter to promote a shared understanding of behaviour expectations. A few children require additional support to manage their emotions. Practitioners are developing strategies to support them individually. This is helping ensure everyone is part of the nursery community.
- Children are developing their awareness of the national wellbeing indicators, in particular the importance of being safe and healthy. They benefit from exploring a range of foods in cooking activities, snack, and lunch times. Children particularly enjoy real-life experiences that allow them to develop new skills and apply their developing understanding, such as exploring safety with fire. Children could be supported to take on more responsibilities such as helping with routines, caring for their playroom, and assessing potential risks in the environment. Practitioners could support children to develop an understanding of the full range of indicators. This will support children to talk about all aspects of their health and wellbeing.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are developing their understanding of statutory duties and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They are keen to develop their understanding to ensure all duties are consistently addressed. Appropriate plans, developed with families, are in place to ensure the individual care and learning needs of children are met. Practitioners are proactive in seeking advice from other professionals when required. This promotes a partnership approach to meeting needs and contributes to removing potential barriers to learning. Senior leaders and practitioners should work together to ensure clear and consistent record keeping is in place to secure the wellbeing and learning of all children. Where appropriate, they should develop links with other professionals to ensure shared understanding and approaches to meeting the needs of individual children.
- Practitioners value and celebrate diversity, ensuring everyone is a valued part of the nursery community. They treat children and each other with respect and support children to develop a positive attitude to differences. Practitioners should continue to develop children's understanding as global citizens, including diversity out with children's immediate experience. Senior leaders should consider the possible barriers to accessing aspects of learning where there are additional costs for families.



### 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

- Children aged two to three years are making progress appropriate to their individual developmental stage. They enjoy pretend play as they make cups of tea in the home corner and take on the persona of favourite characters. Children engage well with sensory experiences, including paint, water, and foam. They enthusiastically enjoy action songs and rhymes.
- Almost all children make satisfactory progress in communication and early language. Most children use a range of vocabulary and engage enthusiastically in conversation. The majority listen well, with a few children requiring support to help them focus on others. Most children enjoy exploring traditional tales and a range of texts. A few children enjoy creating their own stories and understand the need for a beginning, middle and end. The majority of children explore mark making in different contexts with a few beginning to write their name. Practitioners should maximise opportunities to support the development of children's skills in literacy. This should include learning more about mark making and early writing, rhyme, letter names and their associated sounds and mark making.
- In numeracy and mathematics almost all children are making satisfactory progress. They count confidently in routines such as snack and their play and recognise numerals. A few children enjoy exploring larger numbers. Working with practitioners, they use measuring tapes confidently to record their heights. The majority of children persevere to problem solve, for example when investigating properties of three-dimensional objects as they build with blocks. Practitioners would benefit from deepening their understanding of how children develop numeracy and mathematical understanding. This would enable them to provide learning opportunities in all aspects of numeracy and mathematics.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is satisfactory. They are becoming independent in routines including dressing for outdoors and serving snack and lunch. Children demonstrate their agility as they climb trees in the garden and practise throwing and catching with a visiting sports coach. They develop their fine motor control as they manipulate materials in the creative area and use tongs at snack. Most children are ready to take on increased responsibilities and develop a greater understanding of their own wellbeing.
- Practitioners record information to document children's progress. Information gathered does not yet consistently and accurately show the progress children make in their learning at nursery. The skills, experiences, and knowledge that children bring with them from home and

out with nursery need to be identified clearly and consistently built upon. As practitioners continue to develop skills in planning, observing, and recording children's learning a more accurate picture of children's progress, and the value nursery experiences add should emerge.

- Senior leaders and practitioners know families and the needs of the local community well. The team provide sensitive and individualised support to children experiencing potential barriers to progress. This promotes an ethos and culture of inclusion. They could consider the use of planned interventions to structure individual supports, for example to support the development of emotional regulation. Senior leaders should make use of all available information and data to ensure equity for all and to support all children to make the best progress.

## 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.