

Summarised inspection findings

Whitecrook Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Centre

West Dunbartonshire Council

16 December 2025

Education Scotland ELC inspections (pilot phase)

HM Inspectors gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the ELC's work using three quality indicators from [the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors](#). As this inspection is part of Education Scotland's inspection pilot phase using the Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors, these quality indicators have not been graded. This document provides our summarised findings.

Key contextual information

Whitecrook Primary Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) is located in the grounds of Whitecrook Primary School in the town of Clydebank. The ELCC is registered for 40 children at any one time, aged from three years to those not yet attending school. There are currently 27 children on the roll attending between the hours of 8.45 a.m. and 2.45 p.m. The ELCC is a term-time provision.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. She is supported by one principal teacher and one lead practitioner. Further staffing includes four full-time early learning and childcare officers, one peripatetic early stages teacher, one part-time early years assistant, one part-time learning assistant and one part-time clerical assistant.

The nursery consists of one large open plan playroom with direct access to an outdoor space. The school dining hall is used for lunches.

Curriculum

This quality indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs, interests, rights and progress of children at the centre of curriculum design and implementation. [Curriculum](#) is defined as the totality of all that is planned for children from ELC, through school and beyond.

It emphasises that children are entitled to a curriculum underpinned by the [principles of curriculum design](#) and enriched through meaningful learning experiences indoors, outdoors and within the community. It recognises the need for all children to experience opportunities to develop the interests, knowledge, skills, and attributes they will need to adapt, thrive and achieve in today's world. This quality indicator also recognises the importance of the curriculum supporting progress in children's learning as they enter the setting and at key points of transition.

The themes are:

- curriculum rationale and design
- continuity and progression in the curriculum
- partnerships
- skills for life and learning

- The curriculum at Whitecrook Primary School ELCC is built upon trusting, respectful and nurturing relationships where children's needs and interests are at the centre. All staff have a growing understanding of the rights of the child and promote these in their interactions with children and families. They provide a range of interesting experiences for children indoors, in the outdoor play space and within the local community.
- Staff plan experiences for children across all areas of the curriculum. As a result, all children receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Engagement is best in the outdoor space where children explore and investigate a wide range of loose parts and natural resources. As planned, staff should now consider the experiences on offer to children within the indoor spaces taking account of the principles of curriculum design. This should lead to a greater level of independence, depth and challenge for all children.
- Staff have used data and knowledge of their context well to identify that the development of literacy skills is currently a curricular priority. They use helpful local authority baseline tracking systems for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to ensure continuity and progression

within these key areas of the curriculum. As identified by staff, robust planning systems are now required to ensure high quality learning experiences across the full curriculum.

- Staff understand the importance of effective transition into the setting. When required, they collaborate meaningfully with colleagues to provide enhanced transition experiences for individual children. This supports children's wellbeing and learning positively.
- Staff provide opportunities for families to share in their child's learning through planned stay and play sessions and events throughout the year. This approach should now be developed to ensure that parents are fully involved in the life of the setting and have opportunities to contribute to the curriculum. This should include more regular opportunities for families to learn with their child, for example, at the start and end of the daily session. A range of partnerships are in place that widen the experiences on offer for children, for example, visits to the local library and care home. Staff should now develop these partnerships further to ensure that they enrich the curriculum and the overall experiences for children.
- A majority of children confidently ask questions to support them to develop their understanding of their immediate environment. For example, ongoing discussions about an interest in the aeroplanes that pass directly above them on the flight path to the nearby airport. The use of digital technologies is at the early stages within the setting. As planned, staff should develop this further to support children to engage with the wider world outside their immediate environment.
- Most children demonstrate confidence and motivation within their environment and enjoy developing their life skills through a range of role play experiences. For example, in the home corner and mud kitchen. All children have the opportunity to sit on the 'apple tree committee' and support improvements in a developmentally appropriate way.

Learning, teaching and assessment

This quality indicator focuses on how children benefit from access to high quality spaces and well-established routines that help them feel secure and ready to engage. It explores how children are supported to build positive relationships, regulate their emotions, and purposefully participate in a wide range of motivating learning experiences. It demonstrates the importance of staff having a high level of skill supported by strong pedagogical leadership. This includes a clear understanding of pedagogy, the concept of play, how children learn, children's rights and children's behaviour.

It places value on high quality relationships, consistent expectations, and skilled interactions that enable children to sustain engagement, follow routines, and build independence in their learning. This indicator highlights the importance of observing and interacting sensitively with children to plan and assess their learning. It recognises the value of involving children fully in planning their learning indoors, outdoors and within the local community. This quality indicator emphasises the importance of robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress to ensure practitioners know all children very well as learners.

The themes are:

- children's learning and engagement
- interactions to support learning
- planning and assessment
- tracking and monitoring

- Staff have nurturing, trusting relationships with children and their families. As a result, children feel calm, safe and are ready to learn. This is a strength of the setting and supports a majority of children to sustain interest in their spontaneous play. A few children would benefit from a greater level of support to make choices as they transition across the day, leading to more sustained engagement in play.
- Staff have created learning spaces which are thoughtfully presented and inspire children's curiosity. This is particularly evident outdoors where children explore and investigate. Staff should now develop their knowledge of the wider curriculum and progression frameworks. This should strengthen the quality of learning experiences on offer to children.
- The values of resilience, effort, achievement, collaboration, and honesty (REACH) are well established. Staff have a shared understanding of these and continue to give thought to how they use them in a developmentally appropriate way with children. As identified, staff could consider further their expectations of children, for example, care of the environment and strengthening of routines. This would include staff providing further opportunities for children to develop their independence skills and lead their own learning. For example, children making their own playdough which could include use of visual instructions for them to follow. In addition, staff, supported by senior leaders, should further consider the flow of the day to maximise learning, for example, at times of transition.
- Staff know children well and interact with care, sensitivity and patience. They are attuned to children's needs. A majority of interactions involve supportive commentary and appropriate questioning to extend children's thinking. Effective modelling supports this well. Building on this positive practice, senior leaders should ensure consistency of the quality of interactions across the staff team.

- Staff are at the early stages of accessing digital technologies to support and extend children's learning. As planned, staff, supported by senior leaders, should review and develop further their approach to the use of digital technology to enrich children's experiences.
- Staff record experiences and observations of children's learning across the curriculum in learning journals and in floorbooks. Staff professional learning in this area is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of observations recorded. They should continue this work to ensure this quality is consistent for all children. All staff take part in learner conversations with the 'early stages teacher' and lead practitioner. This is beginning to support staff understanding of what children need now and next in their learning. As planned, staff should continue to evaluate systems in place for observing and recording significant learning. This should support staff to follow children's interests and deepen learning, increasing the level of challenge and engagement for all children.
- Staff engage in professional dialogue to consider a range of data, which contributes to tracking children's learning over time. Materials from the local authority are helpful in this process. Senior leaders support staff to engage with data to inform the provision available for all children and to review the impact of this. Moving forward, staff should embed current practice to track progress within literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This should include considering the professional learning staff require and increasing opportunities for families to engage in conversations about their child's learning.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality

This quality indicator highlights the importance of positive relationships and children's wellbeing. It recognises the importance of providing high quality, inclusive, and appropriate rights-based support.

These approaches result in improved outcomes for children's learning, wellbeing and participation. It takes full account of children who may require additional support to access and benefit fully from their entitlement to high quality ELC. This includes identifying and assessing their learning and wellbeing needs in a timely manner and providing personalised and targeted support.

This quality indicator recognises that strong, collaborative partnership working between those supporting children is essential. It highlights the importance of meaningful engagement with children and families to inform decisions about how children's needs should be met.

This quality indicator emphasises the important role senior leaders play in ensuring all staff have relevant and worthwhile professional learning to meet the diverse and sometimes complex needs of children.

The themes are:

- positive relationships and wellbeing
- universal support
- Identifying and assessing learning needs and targeted support
- inclusion and equality

- Staff have developed trusting, nurturing relationships with children and families. They are a motivated team who ensure that the wellbeing of children is at the heart of all that they do. Most children engage well and are calm as they move freely indoors and outside. Children are supported well to manage their emotions and staff use helpful tools, for example, emotion check ins and an emotions story. Staff meet children's holistic needs in a developmentally appropriate way. For example, they use the wellbeing indicators well alongside the REACH values. Staff should now consider how transitions across the day are managed, as these are times that children find emotionally challenging. This would include ensuring that all transitions are necessary and are leading to high quality, rich experiences for all children.
- Staff support families well to make use of their full entitlement of 1140 hours. They work effectively to address any barriers to attendance. As planned, staff should continue to look at creative ways to support families to attend for their full session, for example, encouraging families to join in their child's learning at the end of the day.
- All children are valued and included by staff. A majority of children participate well in the life of the setting and a few children actively engage in decision making. For example, deciding on resources they would like to use and how areas of the nursery should look. They have ongoing opportunities to make choices, for example, what they will have for lunch.
- Staff have a well-developed understanding of statutory duties and keep up to date with guidance and advice. They are clear about their responsibilities to keep children safe and ensure the care and wellbeing needs of all children are met. Staff use local authority baseline data and their observations of children to set individualised learning and development targets

for all children. Supported by senior leaders, staff should now work to ensure that children's individual learning targets are developmentally appropriate and support progression. Staff should review and evaluate all targets regularly with children and families.

- Staff work closely with a range of specialists to ensure the right support for children at the right time. Staff identify children with an additional support need early through transition processes and observation. They create individual plans with targets for those children who require these. Staff should now ensure children's learning targets are focused and measurable. They should include the use of appropriate interventions and resources, including the use of digital technology. Staff seek out professional learning to allow them to meet the specific needs of individual children, for example, professional learning planned from the teacher of the deaf.
- Staff treat children and families with fairness and respect. Staff know their children well and value their contributions to the life of the setting. Staff should explore further ways to support diversity within the setting. This would include working closely with families to enrich children's experiences.

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.

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