

Summarised inspection findings

Flying Start Nursery

Clackmannanshire Council

16 June 2026

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. This document provides our summarised findings.

Key contextual information

Flying Start Nursery is based in Sauchie, Clackmannanshire. The nursery is in partnership with Clackmannanshire Council to provide funded places for children aged from three years to those not yet attending school. The nursery also provides places for children under three years of age, including funded two-year-old places. The nursery is registered for 60 children and there are currently 89 children on the roll. The nursery is located in a previous church manse and has been developed over time to accommodate the needs of children. The nursery is privately owned and is overseen by the owners and an area manager. The nursery has a staffing structure which includes a manager, depute manager, four seniors, fourteen practitioners, two apprentice practitioners, a chef and a housekeeper.

Curriculum	very good
This quality indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs, interests, rights and progress of children at the centre of curriculum design and implementation. <u>Curriculum</u> 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 <u>principles of curriculum design</u> 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 manager and depute manager effectively led the staff team to develop a curriculum rationale, which reflects well the key principles of high-quality early learning and childcare. Children's rights feature increasingly in staff discussions and interactions with children throughout the day. The skilled team have a clear shared vision for children and use local and national guidance to enhance their practice well. This includes reference to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes, which supports effectively their approaches to planning and tracking children's learning.
- Across the year, children enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum which offers them a wide range of motivating learning opportunities. As a result, children engage very well in their learning. Staff ensure all children have access to quality outdoor play and energetic activity across the day. This includes access to a range of loose parts, climbing equipment, bikes and scooters. Children enjoy using wooden blocks to build and balance towers. This supports children to develop effectively their gross and fine motor skills.

- The manager and depute manager worked alongside staff successfully to develop their approaches to curriculum design and implementation. For example, staff support all children very well to receive their entitlement to learning across all curriculum areas. They ensure children have fun and experience breadth, progression and depth across the curriculum. For example, staff support children very well to manipulate art and craft tools and materials. Children enjoy a range of musical activities and in particular country music.
- Staff use local authority guidance well to ensure children receive appropriate challenge in developing their numeracy skills. As a result, pre-school children demonstrate confidence in counting and simple calculations and patterns. Staff enable children very well to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. For example, the nursery is committed to sustainability and children enjoy well-planned experiences to learn about and protect the environment.
- Staff ensure high-quality transitions within and beyond the setting. They support children who require an enhanced transition very well and in a timely manner, to ensure continuity and progression. Staff are very sensitive to individual needs as they support children as they prepare to move on to primary school. They welcome school staff to spend time in the nursery and children visit their schools to develop confidence and meet new friends.
- The nursery, located in the main street of the village, is very well placed to offer children meaningful opportunities in the local community. Staff establish important partnerships within the local community and beyond to enrich the curriculum. For example, children visit the local library and shops regularly and participate in a range of intergenerational activities with care homes.
- Parents report that they are very happy with their child's nursery experience. Parents are welcome in the playroom each day. Staff encourage parents to contribute to children's online learning journals. They arrange worthwhile drop ins, stay and play sessions, learning showcases and provide summary progress reports to support parental engagement.
- Staff are developing effective opportunities to support children's skills for life and learning through motivating and relevant experiences. All staff nurture and support children effectively to develop a positive attitude and determination to succeed. They use praise and encouragement very well, as a result, children are confident to try new experiences. Staff take a well-considered approach to ensuring children have opportunities to develop their digital skills. Children have access to a range of digital tools and programmable toys. Staff carefully monitor children's use of screens and tablets. Staff should continue to develop partnerships with parents and the wider community that help children understand the world of work.

Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
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	

Children under three years of age

- All staff have developed warm, nurturing and caring relationships with children and respond sensitively to their needs. As a result, all children are happy and settled across all playrooms. Staff have developed attractive environments indoors and outdoors and provide a range of activities to suit the needs of individual children. Children enjoy exploring outdoors and have daily opportunities to play and learn in the extensive garden space. This supports them to develop their curiosity and inquiry skills well.

Children aged three years and over

- Staff create warm and caring relationships across the nursery. Parents and staff refer to the 'family atmosphere' and strong relationships are key to children's development and achievements. Children and their families are valued and respected. As a result, all children are settled, happy and confident. Children engage very well in the daily routines and contribute meaningfully. For example, children volunteer and prepare their snack confidently, observing appropriate hygiene and safety as they develop skills using knives and equipment.
- Staff make very effective use of indoors, outdoors and the local community to provide high-quality learning experiences. A series of rooms and outdoor areas provide well-resourced spaces that promote curiosity, creativity and wellbeing. There is a strong emphasis in supporting children to develop the confidence and vocabulary to articulate their feelings, ideas and interests. Overall, staff provide carefully considered experiences, which motivate and engage children for extended periods of time. Children persevere with building and planting activities outdoors. Staff are supporting children to develop a new area where they are planting vegetables and flowers in response to children's interests. The staff team evaluates

and develops the learning environments both indoors and outdoors regularly and thoroughly to ensure children's learning is appropriate and fully supported. Staff use well-considered strategies effectively to support sensitively a few children who need additional help in their learning and play.

- Staff are responsive and demonstrate warm, respectful and nurturing interactions with all children. Led successfully by the manager, depute and senior practitioners, staff have a very good understanding of early years pedagogy. All staff listen to and value children's opinions and ideas. Staff use a range of skilled questioning and commentary to extend children's learning and support them to widen their skills, knowledge and vocabulary. For example, staff support children to explore books and take part in conversations about the text and illustrations. Recently, this has included a range of picture books to support children's understanding of equality and diversity.
- Staff observe and record children's learning and next steps effectively in children's electronic learning journals. These journals are moderated by managers and shared with parents each month. Parents can also contribute learning and achievements to the journal. Staff also talk to children about their learning journals. Staff use photographs well around the nursery to share learning and remind children of their success. All children have a 'scrapbook' where examples of their art activities are stored. Staff use the information gathered and their knowledge of all children well to inform both intentional and responsive planning. Staff display planning for learning well across the playrooms. Staff ensure experiences have a balance of child-led, adult-initiated and adult-directed learning. Moving forward, staff should continue to promote opportunities for children to develop their creativity.
- Staff use very effective systems to monitor, record and report on children's progress, including children who may experience barriers to their learning. The managers and staff use robust ongoing processes for tracking and monitoring children's progress over time. Staff engage in regular discussions to reflect on individual children and evaluate the experiences provided. They use Clackmannanshire Council trackers well to record children's learning and highlight possible gaps. Staff use this data to identify children's next steps in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing and inform planning to ensure children experience breadth and depth across the curriculum.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	very good
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 promote very positive, nurturing relationships with children. They are very proud of the ‘Flying Start Family’, where all children and families are welcome and included. This is a key strength across the nursery. Staff show kindness and respect to each other and are positive role models for children. As a result, almost all children demonstrate kindness and respect to each other. Staff support children well to share how they are feeling each day using a variety of prompts. They should continue to promote this effective practice and encourage all children to discuss their emotions.
- Staff work very effectively as a team to ensure the wellbeing of children, families and each other. They have created an environment which promotes positive outcomes for all children and families. Staff have processes in place to support children’s attendance at nursery and follow up on absences when they occur. Staff use the language of Getting it Right For Every Child in their everyday practice and routines. For example, staff have created attractive achievement displays where all children can celebrate their successes and achievements.
- Staff promote inclusive practice for all and ensure children who may require additional support can access learning in a way that works best for them. Staff interactions and creative use of spaces support almost all children to engage fully in exploration, play and learning. Staff have introduced children’s rights in a developmentally appropriate way, taking full account of children’s individual needs and views. Staff should build on this positive start and continue to support children to learn about their rights.

- Staff know all children very well and are attuned to their individual needs. They work effectively with families and partners to take full account of the diverse range of children's needs. Staff recognise and value the impact collaborative working can have on outcomes for children. For example, staff work successfully with colleagues and parents to ensure smooth transitions across the nursery as children move from room to room.
- Staff have robust assessment processes in place to support the early identification of children's individual learning needs. They work closely with families and colleagues to gather and analyse information relating to children's prior learning and needs. Staff effectively use the national wellbeing indicators to create a holistic assessment of children's strengths and support needs. Managers have developed robust systems to ensure children who may require additional support are supported very well through well planned regularly reviewed interventions.
- Staff engage effectively in professional learning to enhance their knowledge and improve their practice. For example, all staff engaged in professional learning to develop strategies and resources to support children's communication skills. This has a positive impact on children's engagement and learning. Staff welcome specialist input and work alongside colleagues to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- The managers and staff adhere fully to legislative requirements and regularly refresh their knowledge and training. Managers provide ongoing training to all staff to ensure a consistent approach to providing high quality targeted support. All children have detailed individual care plans, which are reviewed regularly with parents. Staff provide highly effective targeted interventions, which are reviewed with children (where appropriate), families and partners. As a result, informed decisions about children's progress and next steps lead to positive outcomes.
- The managers and staff value children and families and treat them with kindness, respect and fairness at all times. Staff promote inclusion successfully and encourage all children to be meaningfully involved in the life of the setting. Staff know all children and parents very well and understand the context in which they live. They provide timely support and respond sensitively when required. Staff provide highly effective strategies to improve the progress of children, including those who may face barriers to their learning. Staff offer meaningful opportunities to support children to learn more about different cultures and lifestyles. This includes a range of resources to support children's understanding of equality and diversity.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.