

Summarised inspection findings

Old Monkland Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

1 October 2024

Key contextual information

Old Monkland Nursery Class is situated within Old Monkland Primary School in Kirkwood, Coatbridge. The nursery consists of a playroom with access to two outdoor areas. The nursery operates on a mixed model, providing 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC). It offers a mixture of full day, term-time placements and part-time 48-week placements. Children attend from the age of three. The nursery is registered for 50 children, currently there are 64 children on the roll. Most children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles 1-3.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery. On a day-to-day basis, two principal lead practitioners lead the nursery. The nursery is currently operating with a lead practitioner and support worker vacancies. In the past two years the nursery has experienced a number of staffing vacancies and changes.

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 work well together to develop a warm, supportive, and inclusive ethos. They listen to children and know them as individuals. Practitioners recognise children's emotional needs and as a result children are happy, confident and respectful of one another. Children are engaged and enthusiastic in their play and learning.
- Practitioners continue to improve the indoor learning environment to define areas more clearly. They have introduced a wider range of resources both indoors and outdoors. This makes learning more accessible for the children and supports their creativity well. Children explore physical resources outdoors with increasing confidence and independence. A few children are riding two-wheeler bikes and balancing with skill. They are developing their independence well and making choices about where they want to play. Practitioners should continue to review the pace and flow of the day, taking account of patterns of attendance and individual children's needs.
- Practitioners encourage children to play well together. Children demonstrate friendship, kindness, and empathy towards each other. When required, most practitioners make effective use of strategies to support children with positive engagement and to understand and manage their emotions. Practitioners should ensure consistency when implementing these strategies.
- Practitioners are kind and interact positively with children. They provide encouragement and use praise well. During the session, practitioners missed a few opportunities to build on children's learning. Practitioners should continue to make consistent use of commentary and open-ended questions to support children's learning through play. They should ensure more effective use of digital technology to enrich children's learning.

- Practitioners know children well, they observe children and are beginning to identify the skills children are developing. They now need to use this information more effectively to improve further the quality of children's learning journals. Practitioners will benefit from developing their knowledge of how young children learn to help them interact more effectively to support and extend children's learning. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to make better use of observations and of play pedagogy.
- Practitioners have recently reviewed and refreshed their processes for planning. They plan adult-directed experiences and respond to children's ideas. Moving forward, practitioners should make sure they are planning developmentally appropriate experiences across the curriculum to ensure children experience breadth, depth and challenge in their learning. National guidance should help them to improve further the quality of interactions, experiences and the use of learning spaces.
- Practitioners are not yet tracking children's progress. As planned, the newly developed tracker should be introduced. This will help practitioners understand the progress children are making in their learning and identify where they require further support. Currently, practitioners use children's learning journals to help them make judgements about children's learning.
- Children who require additional help with their learning have relevant plans in place which support their development and learning. These plans clearly outline interventions to be implemented. Practitioners should apply these strategies consistently to ensure children continue to make the best possible progress.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

- In early communication, language, and literacy, children make satisfactory progress. The majority of children engage in conversation with known adults. Children take part enthusiastically in singing songs and rhymes during small group times. They are ready to explore rhymes and rhyming words more often. A few children recognise initial word sounds. Children demonstrate an interest in mark making and are beginning to add detail to their drawings. Older children are attempting to write recognisable letters of their name. All children would benefit from increased opportunities to write for a purpose through real-life opportunities.
- Children make satisfactory progress in early numeracy. The majority of children use numbers and counting meaningfully in their play. They are beginning to develop an awareness of time by using timers and exploring the days of the week. To support children's progress further, they need a wider range of mathematical experiences in their play. This would support children to make greater progress in all aspects of mathematics.
- In health and wellbeing, children make good progress. All children have daily access to fresh air and physical play that offers them challenge. They demonstrate their physical skills well as they climb, balance and coordinate their movements when using large apparatus. They are learning about risk and can talk about how to be safe. Most children play well together and are developing friendships. A few are learning well to negotiate and resolve minor conflict independently. Children know a range of emotions and can relate these to experiences. They talk confidently about how they feel and why.
- Practitioners are not yet tracking children's learning to demonstrate how well children are progressing over time. The newly developed tracking system should support staff to make more robust judgements about children's learning. In a few learning journals, children's progress over time in relation to early writing is demonstrated.
- Practitioners celebrate children's achievements in a range of ways. For example, the recently introduced 'SHANARRI tree' captures achievements from within the nursery and from home. Children look forward to sharing their achievements and learning journals with the headteacher. Practitioners should continue to encourage parents and children to share their achievements from outwith the nursery.
- Practitioners provide all children with appropriate clothing for outdoor play. They should be mindful of the cost to parents in relation to other nursery experiences. Practitioners support

children who require additional help with their learning well. Practitioners, with support from local authority colleagues, have created plans with clear targets and strategies. They review these plans with parents to ensure children continue to make progress in their development and learning.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children attending the setting were happy, confident and familiar with their nursery experience. They showed us around the service and shared what they enjoyed about it. One child said, "I like nursery because all my friends are here" and another added, "It's good here because you can go outside in the garden and do stuff."

Children's emotional and social development was supported through friendships with peers. Staff encouraged children to be respectful of each other and worked with them to identify and cope with their emotions. Opportunities for children to chat about their feelings helped them to resolve any minor disputes, enabling them to refocus positively on play.

Staff mostly used caring and nurturing approaches to support children's overall wellbeing. Many warm interactions, including cuddles helped children to feel safe and secure. At times, such as when implementing rules, some interactions could have been more nurturing to support children's understanding and wellbeing.

Each child had a personal plan that contained information that supported meeting their needs. Personal plans should now be further developed to help children progress their learning and development. They should include strategies to support children's individual needs. We were satisfied that the manager had a plan in place to address this.

Plans were in place to support children with additional support needs. Some staff used the agreed strategies well to help children feel included and safe. However, these strategies were not applied consistently by all staff. This meant at times, a few children became unsettled.

Children enjoyed eating together in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere. They independently poured their drinks and served their food, developing positive skills for life. Children were kept safe whilst eating through staff supervision and understanding of dietary requirements.

Staff understood their responsibility to protect children from harm. They could identify significant indicators of abuse. However, there was some confusion about who to report concerns to and we found gaps in children's chronologies. This meant that there was the potential for concerns to be overlooked. We have made a requirement about this under quality indicator 3.1.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun as they participated in a range of experiences that met their interests. Particular favourites included, painting, building and modelling with playdough. Children commented, "I like the building area the best" and "I like all these herbs in the playdough to help me cook a curry."

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted through physical play. They benefited from accessing two different gardens, one of which had been recently developed to incorporate some new physical equipment. Outdoor, children demonstrated skills in balance and coordination as they climbed, played football, rode bikes and walked across raised wooden planks and netting.

Children independently accessed toys and materials, making choices about their play. This helped them to develop their ideas and imagination. For example, in the garden children pretended to make a campfire using small logs and plastic tubing. Some play spaces had been developed to support children's play. For example, the book area had been sensitively structured with soft furnishings, twinkling lights and comfortable seats to encourage children to read. Other areas needed to be better resourced to spark children's creativity and curiosity and to add depth to their learning.

Staff were in the early stages of developing their approach to planning children's play and learning. They had participated in some training to support this, but would benefit from more learning around child development theory and best practice to support high quality play and learning experiences (see area for improvement 1).

Plans were in place for leaders to meet with staff to discuss their work. We agreed that this was necessary to support reflection on individual professional learning goals. This would contribute to the development of new knowledge and skills that could be used in practice to meet children's needs.

Staff played alongside children and responded enthusiastically to their play suggestions. This contributed to children's interests being met and some ideas being progressed. Greater use of skilled questioning and use of mathematical concepts would help to widen children's thinking, extend their skills and consolidate their learning.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Over the past few years, the service had experienced many changes including staffing and service delivery. This meant they were at the beginning of their improvement journey. The head teacher promoted a positive attitude to change and had successfully motivated the staff team to make improvements for children and families.

Staff reflected well together and showed commitment to securing positive outcomes for children and families. Regular staff meetings provided an opportunity to share improvement ideas. This had motivated some staff to take on lead roles in developing the setting. This was reflected particularly well in the improvements made to the garden. Continued development of play spaces, underpinned with best practice guidance would further enhance children's play.

Leaders recognised the importance of high-quality learning through play and placed this at the heart of improvement planning. The nursery improvement and action plan reflected the needs of the setting. The pace of change had been slow, but this was reflective of the development needs and changes to the staff team. More opportunities to include the views of children and families in developing the setting would help ensure improvements met their needs.

Some auditing processes needed to be developed to ensure children's safety. We had some concerns about the number of accidents and incidents involving children at the setting. We acknowledge that some action had been taken to address this, however it did not go far enough to significantly reduce the number of times children had been injured. Therefore, we have made a requirement that reflects this (see requirement 1).

Staff were able to tell us about safeguarding concerns they had about children. Information in relation to this was logged on online chronologies. However, we found that some chronology

entries were missing key information about the action taken to protect children from harm. We also identified times where staff were not clear if referrals had been made to other agencies when needed. It is important that the manager reviews chronologies to ensure action has been taken to protect children from harm. We have reflected this within requirement 1.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements or areas for improvement. As a result of this inspection, there is one requirement and one area for improvement.

Requirements

By 26 July 2024, the provider must ensure that children are safe and protected from harm. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure that children's chronologies contain clear details of child protection concerns and action taken to safeguard children.
- b) audit and respond to accidents and incidents occurring in the setting.

This is to comply with Regulation (4) (1a) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

Area for improvement

To ensure that children experience high quality play and learning, the manager and provider should ensure that staff access training and apply it in practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge are aligned with national practice guidance for early years in Scotland 'Realising the ambition: being me.'

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.