

Summarised inspection findings

St Columbkille's Primary School Nursery Class

South Lanarkshire 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

St Columbkille's Primary School Nursery Class is located within St Columbkille's Primary School, South Lanarkshire. The nursery class has one large playroom, one outdoor space and access to the school gym hall, dining area and outside space. The nursery is registered to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC) for 48 children, aged from three years to those not yet attending school. There are 48 children currently on the roll. Staffing comprises one team leader, eight early years practitioners and one learning assistant.

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 nursery class is an integral part of the primary school community. The shared curriculum rationale across the nursery and school was reviewed and refreshed in 2023. This is centred on the key values of kindness and respect. Staff co-created the curriculum rationale in partnership with the school community, including with children, parents, staff and partners. The curriculum rationale takes full account of the totality of the curriculum offer within the nursery and school. It supports staff very well to plan and deliver a well-considered and engaging curriculum.
- The curriculum is underpinned by positive and nurturing relationships. Staff provide a broad and balanced curriculum, with a wide range of experiences supporting children to receive their entitlements. They plan well for children's learning across all curricular areas indoors and outdoors. Children have daily opportunities to engage in outdoor learning, with a few children spending an increased amount of time outdoors. For example, children enthusiastically engage in creating a covered space to protect themselves from the wind and rain. Staff continue to develop the outdoor space to enhance opportunities for inquiry and exploration. As planned, staff should continue to engage in their forest excursions to enrich children's outdoor learning experiences.
- Staff support all children well, through their curriculum offer, to develop the four capacities and become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Children are capable and confident and are now ready to take an increased role in leading their own learning. Staff plan children's learning, taking account of the key principles

of curriculum design, for example, ensuring curricular experiences offer enjoyment, breadth and progression.

- All staff know children, families and the local context very well. This is evident in their practice. For example, staff take time to get to know children and families prior to starting and during transition into the nursery. They use their knowledge of individuals to provide a curriculum which is relevant and accessible for all children. Staff use a range of effective approaches to gather robust information to support continuity and progression across the curriculum for all children. Transition across the early level is enriched by the strong collaborative work across the nursery and school. This has a positive impact on children and supports them to settle well into primary 1. Senior leaders support continuity and progression for children effectively through shared approaches to documenting and recording children's learning and development.
- Partnerships and community engagement are a strength within the nursery. Staff invite partners to support the implementation of the curriculum. For example, a visit from the teddy hospital impacts positively on children's learning. The visit supports children to feel more confident during medical appointments through play-based experiences. As planned, staff should re-establish opportunities for inter-generational learning work with a local care home. Staff demonstrated the impact their previous engagement had on children and residents, through their informative floorbook. Parents have worthwhile opportunities to engage in their child's learning through online learning journals, home link resources, stay and play and family learning experiences. Parents share their knowledge and skills with the children through a range of opportunities, including learning French and hearing about life in America. The 'Nursery Update', 'Our Learning Adventures' and 'St Columbkille's News' keep parents informed about current learning and news.
- Staff support all children effectively to develop their confidence and skills, through nurturing and caring approaches. Children develop their skills for life and learning through a range of well-considered experiences. Staff focus on and talk about skills with children, through the provision of a very effective range of experiences, which engage children well. Children ask questions and have opportunities to develop their digital skills using a tablet computer, for example increasing their knowledge of the Titanic. Staff should continue to offer a wider range of digital technology. This should enable children's knowledge of the world in which they live and skills for life to be extended and enhanced.

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 work very effectively as a team and have created a warm, welcoming ethos, as they build relationships with children and their families. This provides a calm environment, where staff clearly know all children very well. Children benefit from nurturing interactions with staff, resulting in them being happy, relaxed and secure within the setting. Relationships between children are positive, as they show respect and kindness to each other.
- All children are engaged in their learning and are familiar with the routine of the day. Children make decisions about where they want to play and have the opportunity to explore a wide range of resources independently. They are confident to move around and access the learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. Staff support children who require additional support effectively to access their learning, through inclusive approaches, including using visuals. A calm corner provides children space to rest during the day if they choose. Staff should develop further learning experiences and spaces to enhance children's natural curiosity. Children would benefit from more open-ended resources to support them to use their imagination and develop their own ideas in more depth.
- Staff treat all children with love and kindness. They listen to children and value their opinions. Staff consider well children's contributions to decisions that affect them and use the information to inform future learning. They make effective use of questions to support children's understanding and encourage and support them to extend their thinking. This can be observed when staff lead children through adult planned activities. Staff currently provide a limited range of digital technologies to support children's individual learning. Staff should make further use of digital technology to enable children to utilise appropriate digital resources to research their interests more independently.
- Staff use a robust planning and assessment format to capture children's progress. This is evident through the adult-initiated activities organised. Staff gather observations of children and

use these to assess children's learning and plan children's experiences across the nursery. Staff track and assess effectively the progress children are making to identify their next steps in learning. As a result, staff's knowledge of children and what they can do is very well considered. They have a comprehensive view of the progress all children are making across the curriculum.

- Staff celebrate children's achievements through a range of approaches and document these within their learning journal. Parents communicate with staff using the online learning journal and share achievements and events from home. Collaboration between children, parents and staff is evident as together they make decisions about the child's learning targets. Children are making very strong progress in their learning, as a result of this unified approach. For some children, staff should ensure there is a sufficient level of challenge in individual targets.
- Staff focus on intentional planning during the planning process. Staff should now review the pace of learning and allow more time within the planning process to follow children's ideas and interests in more depth. Slowing down the intentional approach would allow staff more time to focus on the interesting ideas children are bringing to their play. Staff currently gather small groups of children to focus on a specific aspect of the learning tracker. Staff use this time to assess and document children's progress within a Curriculum for Excellence outcome. Children's play can be interrupted for this intervention to take place. Staff should consider carefully how changes could be made to the process to allow staff to gather this information during children's play.
- Staff monitor children's individual progress regularly. Senior leaders discuss children's achievements in learning using progression pathways introduced by the local authority. This is a shared approach that follows the children as they move into school. Children who require additional support with their learning are given support and challenge where required, through appropriate interventions. Staff, parents and partners work together on the skills required to ensure all children make the appropriate progress. This is having a positive impact on outcomes for children.

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 embed positive relationships and nurturing approaches across the setting, which support children to settle well in a safe and secure environment. All staff demonstrate and role model respect, kindness and consideration for children, families and their colleagues. They work well as a team to ensure that the wellbeing of children and families are a key focus within the setting. Attendance is good overall at nursery. Senior leaders have appropriate processes in place to monitor children's absence. Staff support all children to manage their emotions through a range of strategies and interventions. For example, children have opportunities to share how they are feeling and check in with staff throughout the day.
- Staff strive to get it right for all children, through respectful and trusting relationships. They promote the wellbeing indicators on displays and through daily routines and conversations. Children talk about being safe and healthy, for example, demonstrating and confidently describing their role as a safety officer. Staff encourage children to engage fully in the life of the setting, with leadership roles and opportunities to make decisions. Staff should consider further opportunities for children to develop early leadership skills, for example, risk assessing the outdoors.
- Staff embed inclusive practice across the setting, with all children supported to feel included within day-to-day experiences. Staff support children effectively who may face barriers to their learning, to access learning, which is appropriate for them. Children engage well in their play as they explore the range of experiences available indoors and outdoors. High quality interactions and skilful engagement from staff supports all children to participate well in experiences, such as Bookbug and gym time.

- Staff work closely with all families and when appropriate, important partners, to take account of the diverse range of children's individual needs. They plan and record key information, which supports all children to make progress in their learning. Staff value the input from outside agencies and recognise the positive impact of collaborative working on children's experiences. Staff engage in helpful learning conversations with all children to support their individual learning and development needs.
- Strong partnerships with parents support staff to recognise and build upon children's prior learning and needs. Staff co-create children's wellbeing targets with parents, which build on prior learning. They review these targets regularly in discussion with parents and identify next steps. Staff share children's individual targets across the team, to ensure children are supported in a consistent manner. Staff effectively identify individual learning needs early, which supports positive outcomes for all children.
- Senior leaders and staff adhere fully to legislative requirements and regularly refresh their knowledge and skills to support all children. Staff provide high quality targeted support to all children who may require additional help with their learning. Staff hold regular reviews with families to discuss children's progress and next steps. Children achieve positive outcomes, as a result of targeted support.
- Staff treat children and families with kindness, respect and fairness, in line with the setting's values. Staff promote inclusion and continue to develop children's rights in a meaningful way. Staff work closely with parents and partners to promote and support diversity and enrich children's experiences. For example, children and families came together to experience food from Columbia, as a result of effective parental engagement. Staff understand fully the socio economic, cultural and linguistic context in which children and families live. They respond sensitively to offer well-informed timely support to improve outcomes for all children and families.

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