

Summarised inspection findings

Westquarter Primary School Nursery

Falkirk Council

9 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

Westquarter Primary School Nursery is an early learning and childcare (ELC) setting based in Westquarter Primary School. It serves the Westquarter, Redding and Reddingmuirhead communities. The setting is registered for up to 48 children aged three to those not yet attending school at any one time. At the time of inspection, there were 37 children on the nursery roll. Children can attend full-day sessions from 8:45 am – 2:45 pm during term time. The nursery has one playroom with free-flow access to the fully enclosed outdoor space. A few children have an identified support need including a few children who have English as an additional language (EAL). The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile 9. Just over a quarter of children live in SIMD deciles 4 to 6 and 17% live in decile 2. The headteacher has overall responsibility and is the names manager for the setting and has delegated the responsibility for management of the ELC to the acting principal teacher (APT). The APT has only recently taken up post after changes to the leadership team. The senior early years officer (SEYO) has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the setting. The SEYO is supported by six early years officers, two early years assistants and one support for learning assistants.

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

- Senior leaders and staff place a high value on the views of children and parents, and they use these views effectively to shape the experiences offered in the nursery. Parents recognise the positive impact of staff's approach in helping their children engage positively with the setting. Staff have developed a curriculum rationale based on children's interests, parents' views, national and local guidance, and the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Importantly, they use local authority guidance well to develop their curriculum offer, which builds on children's developmental stages. This helps staff plan a range of experiences across indoor and outdoor spaces, including weekly use of areas in the local community.
- Staff have rightly identified literacy and communication as a key focus for their curriculum. As a result, children regularly engage in singing, recount rhymes, and listen to stories and music to support their early language development. Staff draw upon parents' views, children's individual interests, and CfE to plan medium and long-term learning. This supports strong and well-established transitions between home and nursery. Staff offer children a wide range of

learning opportunities by using a continuous and core provision plan. They are developing increasing links to numeracy both indoors and outdoors.

- The SEYO tracks curriculum coverage effectively and identifies gaps to support staff during regular planning meetings. This helps to ensure all curricular areas are well planned for. Staff identify important dates and festivals to help children learn about a wide range of cultural events. Staff's balance of continuous, responsive, and intentional planning ensures children experience a broad and well-planned curriculum. It also allows staff to respond to children's interests and needs. Staff should now review how they plan for all children to access appropriately challenging experiences and resources across the curriculum. This should help all children experience progressive experiences that match increasingly well to their age and stage of development. This should also strengthen children's progress across the early level.
- Staff have effective working relationships with health partners. They regularly discuss cohort needs and improve environments and resources to support children's engagement and peer interaction. Staff engage parents effectively through informal events such as 'stay and play'. This helps parents better understand what their child experiences during a nursery session. Staff should continue to explore how parents and a wider range of partners can enhance children's experiences. This includes engaging parents in workshops to build their confidence and skills in supporting their child's development beyond the nursery setting.
- Children consistently show high levels of engagement across a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences. These include physical play and activities that support early language and fine motor development. Staff thoughtfully audit and adapt learning environments, enhancing outdoor spaces to promote gross motor skills and exploration. They make good use of local woodlands and parks to help children explore, manage risk, understand safety, and develop their physical skills. Children show independence and perseverance when navigating physical challenges. Staff use digital devices to help children research their interests. For example, children ask questions about animals and use visuals on a tablet to add detail to their drawings. Staff manage digital device use well, ensuring it enhances learning rather than becoming a focus in itself. Staff should continue to review learning spaces to ensure there is an appropriate balance of sensory play and more challenging provocations. This should help children further develop their creativity and enquiry skills across the curriculum.
- Children enjoy leadership opportunities such as preparing snacks and gathering lunch numbers. These experiences help build confidence, support navigation of the nursery and wider school building, and develop important life skills. Staff could consider how to offer more leadership opportunities for children to apply their skills in a wider range of contexts.

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 create a calm, engaging environment where children thrive. They consistently model the nursery's values of respect, kindness, and happiness, which helps children settle confidently each day. Staff nurture and support children very well, using their deep understanding of each child to ensure they feel secure and engaged. They welcome children warmly, and almost all children demonstrate independence on arrival, confidently following routines and engaging with available resources. Staff respond promptly to children's needs, offering one-to-one support when necessary, particularly for those new to the setting. This personalised approach ensures children feel happy, secure, and ready to engage with their peers and nursery experiences. When disagreements arise, staff create space for children to resolve issues independently, helping them develop communication strategies and emotional regulation. Staff lead a focused welcome time in small groups, using this moment to ensure children start the day calmly and positively. They support children skilfully who need extra reassurance.

■ Staff listen attentively to children's interests and use their comments to enrich learning opportunities. For example, they extend storytelling experiences with puppets, encouraging children to participate actively and take turns. Staff interact calmly and sensitively, drawing on their strong understanding of child development and individual needs to sustain children's engagement. Most children remain focused for extended periods, and staff gently re-engage those who require support to sustain their play. All staff use questioning well to engage children in experiences. Where a few staff use open-ended questions, they involve children in high-quality conversation that helps children question, explore and investigate. For instance, children predict and test which loose parts produce the loudest sounds, demonstrating curiosity and problem-solving. The staff team should now share this practice to improve the quality of discussions for all children. As a next step, staff and senior leaders should expand the range of open-ended resources to meet children's different developmental needs. They should review specific areas, such as the mud kitchen, to introduce more challenging provocations.

- Staff plan well, maintaining a balance of continuous, intentional and responsive planning. They gather relevant information on each child from children themselves, parents, and observations from the staff team. Staff use daily catch-ups and regular team meetings to share what they know about children's learning and development across the team. They use children's interests effectively to shape learning experiences. Children are proud of their profiles and are supported to select items they wish to capture and share through their online journal. Parents are highly supportive of the nursery and welcome the communication about their child's experiences through the online tool. Where observations provide high-quality evidence of children's progress, staff use this very well to identify children's next steps. Senior leaders should now focus on sharing this strong practice across the staff team. This would ensure children's observations provide high-quality evidence that accurately captures what children can do and where their next steps are.
- Staff are developing their confidence in using the local authority progression and assessment framework to guide their understanding of children's progress. They discuss developmental stages and the evidence they have gathered about children's progress as a full team. This is helping staff develop a shared understanding of children's progress. Staff are embedding the local authority tracking tool, which provides important and helpful information about each child's progress. They capture information about children's progress in early language, early mathematics, wellbeing, and the wider curriculum. The SEYO now uses this data very effectively to identify changes required to the curriculum. The SEYO has rightly identified the need to use this helpful tool as a team more regularly to respond to gaps in children's progress.

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 are highly nurturing, which results in children who are confident, settled, and emotionally secure. Children are encouraged to be independent and know they can seek help when needed. Staff prioritise positive relationships with families, engaging them through an online tool, questionnaires, and flexible 'stay and play' sessions. They offer regular meetings with families, when required, to build trusted relationships and support wider wellbeing needs. Children's understanding of wellbeing is well developed. Staff use a variety of resources, such as stories and visual prompts, to help children understand the range of emotions they may feel. This is helping them to develop the language of wellbeing. Staff deliver well-planned, targeted wellbeing groups and use emotion-focused resources to further enhance this. Children engage well in these sessions and are developing their understanding of their own and other children's feelings. Their understanding of safety is strong, and staff embed this language in their daily practice.
- Staff know all children very well and respond effectively to their interests and needs. They use ongoing holistic observations and focused observations to gather information and plan appropriate next steps for children's learning and development. Staff support children effectively through quality interactions and experiences. Transitions throughout the day are well planned to support consistency and emotional security. Staff access professional learning opportunities regularly, including interaction training, phonological awareness, and autism awareness. This includes advice from professional partners. They use this information well to influence practice and improve their confidence in supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing. They have enriched the nursery environment through successful community grants, which have funded developments such as the calm corner, outdoor shelter, sandpit, and planters. This contributes to the calm and inclusive learning space which helps children engage well with their play.

- Children's learning needs are identified and assessed using a range of evidence. Staff use this information to plan appropriate support, which is reviewed regularly and updated through wider planning meetings. Staff set meaningful targets and track these well. They ensure transitions are carefully planned to meet the needs of all children. Children requiring additional support benefit from strong partnership working with professionals such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and health visitors. Staff use short, simple instructions and visual supports with children to aid understanding and work closely with families to ensure consistency. Staff ensure children have individualised plans, and additional planning such as enhanced 'what matters to me' profiles and personal evacuation plans. These help staff use consistent strategies to manage transitions and provide the right support to children. Staff have developed sensory spaces to support children who may experience emotional or sensory challenges, particularly during transitions or peer interactions. These areas are child-informed and include resources that promote self-regulation and understanding of others. This is having a positive impact for identified children.
- Staff have embedded inclusive practices within the nursery. They support children well to access the full range of experiences, including trips, celebrations, and outdoor learning. Attendance is consistently high, and staff identify any barriers and address them to ensure equitable participation. Staff support children to understand and celebrate diversity. For example, children learn about different disabilities and cultures. Staff stock the library and learning areas with resources such as books about disabilities. They use visual supports, sign language, and EAL strategies effectively to strengthen their inclusive practice. Staff use rights-based approaches and are beginning to develop their use of rights-based language with children. As planned, staff should continue to develop professional discussions around the Children's Charter. They could visit other nurseries to gather good practice and ideas suited to their own context.

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 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