

Summarised inspection findings

Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

7 October 2025

Key contextual information

Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral Nursery Class is situated within Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral Primary School in Motherwell, North Lanarkshire. There is a large playroom and free-flow access to an outdoor environment. Children access 1140 hours of early learning childcare (ELC) by attending morning, afternoon or full day placements between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm across the full year. Children aged three to those not yet attending primary school can attend. There are currently 72 children registered, with a maximum of 50 children attending at any one time.

The headteacher and principal teacher have overall strategic responsibility for the nursery class. There are three principal lead practitioners. There are three early learning and childcare practitioners and three early learning support workers. There are currently three vacant positions. There have been significant staffing changes, with most nursery practitioners starting within the last year.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are: ■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community ■ strategic planning for continuous improvement ■ implementing improvement and change	
■ Senior leaders and practitioners created the values of love, friendship, effort and growth for the nursery class in 2020. Practitioners refer the children to the values daily and children are beginning to demonstrate them as they play and learn. Practitioners model the values well and provide children with values stickers when they demonstrate one of the values successfully. This is helping to support children's understanding of the values in a developmentally appropriate way. ■ All staff have worked well together to establish positive relationships and work effectively together in the newly established nursery team. As planned, senior leaders and practitioners need to work with parents and children to review and embed a clear, shared and aspirational vision, values and aims. They should ensure this is based on current thinking and research and is relevant to the new team and current cohort of children. As planned, senior leaders should review the vision, values and aims regularly to ensure they remain relevant to all current stakeholders. ■ The newly developed team are beginning to engage well in self-evaluation using national guidance. They have worked together to develop a nursery improvement plan. As a next step they should ensure this focuses on what is important to the setting to support children to make the best possible progress in their learning. For example, there needs to be clear leadership roles and responsibilities to drive forward improvements. The headteacher needs to reflect on the strong practice in self-evaluation and school improvement in the school and apply similar approaches in the nursery. Senior leaders and practitioners need to look outwards and explore ways to build capacity for improvement. This should support them to deepen their understanding of best practice in early learning and childcare. Practitioners need to build time for professional dialogue and collegiate learning into the varied shift pattern.	

- As a very new team, practitioners are developing a shared understanding of pedagogy. All practitioners engage well in regular professional development review meetings. This helps them to identify and access relevant professional development opportunities. Practitioners use new learning well to plan experiences for children. For example, recent training on baseline assessments and children's developmental milestones is helping practitioners to make more accurate professional judgements about children's progress. Practitioners lead on aspects of development, based on their strengths and interests, such as family engagement, outdoors, digital and children's rights. They should build on this positive start by sharing their knowledge with each other and developing clear, shared actions to lead to improvements. This should enhance the quality of children's experiences even further to support them to make better progress in their learning.
- Senior leaders need to manage the pace of change more effectively. They have developed a new learning, teaching and assessment framework. There are early signs of this impacting positively on children's learning experiences. Senior leaders now need to build on this positive start, and extend the existing practice within the school, to develop and implement a robust calendar of quality assurance. This should include rigorous monitoring of learning and teaching. This could help to improve further the quality of learning and teaching. Senior leaders and practitioners need to share responsibility for the process of change and improvement. They should continue to build on the framework with practitioners to ensure effective practice is maintained and high-quality play pedagogy is embedded. Planning for continuous improvement must continue to be evidence-based and clearly linked to robust self-evaluation which includes staff, parents and children. This now needs to be driven at pace. There are early signs of practitioners feeling empowered to have a positive impact on improvements, leading to better outcomes for children.

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 have developed very positive relationships with children. They model the nursery values of friendship and love effectively in their interactions with children. Children treat each other with kindness well. Almost all practitioners intervene sensitively when required to support children to regulate their emotions.
- Almost all children engage successfully for extended periods of time in spontaneous play experiences in the indoor and outdoor environments. Almost all practitioners use a range of techniques well, such as open-ended questioning and commentary, to support and extend children's learning. This supports children to sustain their interest in creative and imaginative play experiences. A few practitioners skilfully scaffold play to broaden and deepen children's understanding of new concepts.
- Most practitioners carry out observations of children's experiences. They capture children's reflections on experiences in nursery to document how children spend their time. Practitioners should now build on this to have a greater focus on recording individual children's significant learning. This approach to assessment should demonstrate more clearly the progress children are making. Practitioners upload their observations to an online learning journey, and these are shared with parents. However, this is not timeous or regular enough. Practitioners should build on this positive start to sharing children's progress to ensure parents receive regular and up-to-date information on their children's progress and achievements. They need to find ways for both children and parents to make valuable contributions to these online learning journeys.
- Practitioners identify intended learning experiences using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. They use progression pathways for all curricular areas to plan a few adult-led or adult-initiated learning experiences each term. Practitioners should make more effective use of significant learning observations and information in personal planning processes. This should help practitioners to provide more relevant and challenging experiences for all children. Practitioners are beginning to plan responsively with children well. They now need to take action on children's bigger ideas timeously to show these are valued. For example, children have ideas to develop their garden, such as growing their own vegetables. This should be developed further with children to ensure they feel valued and listened to.
- Senior leaders have recently implemented a tracking system for literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. They use this system well, alongside developmental overviews for children with additional support needs, to track children's progress. Building on this practice, senior leaders now need to support practitioners to monitor and evaluate all children's progress using these systems consistently. This should help practitioners to identify and address gaps in children's learning and development more effectively.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners plan the curriculum well for all learners. They use progression pathways for all curriculum areas. Practitioners provide a curriculum based on children's interests. Children develop their skills using a range of open-ended materials and loose parts, both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners have been developing the outdoor environment to maximise opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills.
- Practitioners use their local community very well to offer children a range of experiences. Children visit the nearby heritage centre to learn about local history using developmentally appropriate experiences. Practitioners and children visit local parks and shops regularly to support children to learn and develop skills in real life contexts.
- Practitioners support children well as they progress from nursery to P1. There is a well-planned programme of transition activities to support children to become familiar with the new environment. For example, children are joined by P6 buddies to help them to establish friendships. This supports children to increase their confidence and become ready to begin school. Children who require additional support with their learning engage in an enhanced transition programme. Parents and partners are fully involved in this process, and this results in positive outcomes for children as they progress into school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have established positive relationships with children and their families. Practitioners and parents share information during drop off and pick up times and senior leaders are always available for parents to discuss any concerns.
- Practitioners plan a range of family engagement activities, such as stay and play, story sessions and forest school. Senior leaders and practitioners should now start to gather data on how these activities are improving outcomes for children. This should enable practitioners to highlight to families the impact they can have on their child's learning and development when they are more involved.
- Practitioners support all children to take part in a bespoke award system, the Rose Trainer achievement award. Children start this achievement award in nursery and continue to work on it as they progress through the primary school. This supports children very well to develop their skills at nursery and at home. Children share their successes with their parents and celebrate their wider achievements.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Almost all practitioners are building positive relationships with all children. Most children share their feelings with practitioners each morning. If children are upset or worried practitioners support them gently to identify what would help them to feel better. As a result, children feel valued and confident to access all areas independently. Almost all children make effective, regular use of the outdoor environment. Groups of children access forest school and successfully risk-take and cooperate well with each other. Children have developed resilience and a strong awareness of safety. This is having a positive impact on their wellbeing.
- Almost all children successfully regulate their own emotions well. The majority of children talk about the wellbeing indicators and successfully use these in their play. For example, they play safely and include others. The majority of children identify their emotions well, using words such as happy, sad, angry and jealous. A few children are beginning to become aware of children's rights. Children would benefit from explicit learning about their rights throughout the nursery day.
- Practitioners use personal plans for most children to gather information and plan a few next steps for individual children. However, these are not always fully complete or updated as required. Senior leaders and practitioners must ensure all personal plans are fully completed and used effectively to support children's learning and development. These must be reviewed when there are any changes for children, or every six months. This will ensure children's wellbeing needs are known and appropriately planned for.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are aware of their statutory duties with regard to child protection and supporting those children who require additional support for learning. There are appropriate plans in place to help children who require additional support with their learning. Practitioners and parents have developed suitable targets for children's learning, and these are reviewed and updated regularly. Practitioners use strategies and interventions, such as visuals and varying forms of communication well to support children to understand and make progress. Moving forward, all staff need to have clear roles and responsibilities to support children's health, care and wellbeing needs.
- Practitioners have developed an inclusive ethos across the nursery. They treat all children and families with fairness and respect. Children explore and celebrate diversity, such as engaging in festivals and celebrations from a range of cultures throughout the year. Building on this positive start, practitioners should now explore ways to develop this further by continuing to challenge discrimination and reduce barriers to participation.

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

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in early language and communication. They engage in conversations with familiar adults and their friends while playing. A few children join in with familiar rhymes and songs using actions. A few children independently explore a range of books across the indoor and outdoor environment. Children are becoming familiar with key features of books through a focused story of the month. The majority of children experiment with mark-making well using a variety of materials. A minority of children are beginning to add details such as facial features to images of people they create. Children need more opportunities to mark-make for a purpose. Practitioners should continue to develop a more literacy-rich environment to support children to make better progress.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in early mathematics. They explore the properties of three-dimensional objects when building models using blocks. They explore the concept of capacity when emptying and filling containers in water play and when pouring their own drinks at mealtimes. A minority of children recognise numerals within 10. Children need more opportunities to explore money, time, number structures, number sequences and counting strategies. Practitioners should continue to develop further opportunities to develop, apply and extend children's numeracy and mathematical skills.
- The majority of children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing their gross motor skills well through opportunities to balance, climb and run within the outdoor space and in visits to parks. Children would benefit from daily opportunities to ride bikes and trikes. This should help children to develop their physical skills further. Children demonstrate a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe during riskier play outdoors and trips to the woods. The majority of children identify different types of healthy food during the snack and lunchtime routines. They are developing independence through the routines of self-service of lunch, handwashing and toothbrushing.
- Senior leaders and practitioners are beginning to track children's progress over time. Moving forward, senior leaders now need to support practitioners to ensure significant learning is identified and built on. They need to support practitioners to engage in moderation activities to develop reliable professional judgements about the progress children are making.
- Practitioners use praise effectively when they recognise children's achievements. They support children well to engage with the whole school Rose Trainer achievement award. They celebrate these successes fully with children using the achievement tree, values stickers and the proud wall. This is helping children to develop a positive attitude to learning. As a next step,

practitioners should ensure all children are supported to achieve and that all parents are active participants in supporting their children's development.

- Practitioners are aware of the socio-economic backgrounds of their families. They are proactive in removing potential financial barriers to participation in nursery activities. This includes providing pre-loved uniforms, sunhats and sun cream. They support families well to access food banks, food packages and community supported initiatives. This supports children and families successfully to feel included and supported by the nursery.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced positive care from kind and responsive staff. Some warm interactions between staff and children were observed. Children were offered comfort and cuddles when required and this supported their emotional wellbeing. Staff responded appropriately to children's early communication attempts, this meant children were nurtured and respected.

Personal plans were in place for some children; however, this was not consistent for all children. There was a significant lack of current information for some children, and this meant that staff had little or no access to important information to meet some children's individual needs.

We asked the provider and manager to ensure that meaningful personal plans were in place for all children and that staff understood the individual needs of all children in their care. This would support staff to understand what was important to each child and meet their needs, wishes and choices consistently and more effectively (see requirement 1).

Children experienced calm relaxed and unhurried mealtimes where they could eat at a pace which was right for them. Children had some opportunities for independence such as pouring their own drinks and self-serving their sides at lunch, this helped to build their confidence and develop important life skills. There were some missed opportunities for rich conversations between children and staff. We asked the service to consider ways in which the lunchtime experience could be enhanced.

Children were kept safe as staff had a clear procedure for meeting individual dietary and allergy requirements. Medication was safely stored and clearly labelled. Consideration should now be given to embedding monthly medication audits to ensure all medication details are current, accurate and medication is within the expiry date.

Child protection procedures were in place and staff could report concerns with confidence. During the inspection we found there was an outdated policy for nursery non-attendance which meant that staff were unclear when to contact families when a child was absent. We asked the provider to ensure the policy was clear and reflected best practice guidance to make contact with families on the first day of absence.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

1.3 Play and learning

Children were engaged in their play and having fun. Children benefitted from being able to choose indoor or outdoor play throughout the day. The service had developed the indoor and outdoor spaces with a variety of sensory and open-ended resources. These resources encouraged children to explore, be creative, work together and be engrossed in their play for extended periods.

Leaders and staff had made some progress in developing child-led planning through recording children's experiences in floorbooks and using planning sheets to identify potential resources to facilitate play opportunities. More work was needed to embed planning and to capture significant learning of children. Staff had not shared any significant observations with families for over 30 days as no observations had been uploaded to the online learning journals. We asked the service to consider ways to involve children in sharing their learning with their families to ensure families were regularly updated and could be more involved in their child's learning and development. This

would enable children to share the play and learning experiences that support them to reach their full potential.

Leaders and staff should continue to reflect on and build as a team to fully meet children's needs through high quality interactions and observations.

Children benefitted from daily fresh air and exercise in the outdoor environment. Children had access to large-scale open-ended resources such as pallets, tyres and pipes. This encouraged children to spend longer periods outdoors. Staff understood the benefits of regular outdoor play and we saw them supporting children with risky play. For example, climbing trees, and using the hammock in the forest. This enabled children to understand their own capabilities and develop confidence in how to be safe.

Language, literacy, and numeracy experiences were woven throughout the play space. For example, children enjoyed using QR codes to access stories both on their own or with staff in the comfortable reading area.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from a setting that was clean, well-ventilated and had plenty of natural light. This created a welcoming and homely atmosphere.

Children had ample space to move around freely and take part in a range of play experiences. Staff had worked together to create an environment where children felt safe and relaxed. Play spaces were carefully considered and staff were creative in their provision. For example, a variety of authentic real-life objects enhanced play spaces and promoted children's curiosity and creativity. Consideration had been given to creating quiet spaces for children to rest and relax. This supported children's emotional wellbeing. The cabin in the outdoor area provided children with another space to play or relax on the comfy couch with staff. This was used well by children across their day.

Children could access snack outdoors and this meant that their play was not interrupted and gave them choice between eating outdoors or indoors.

Staff demonstrated an understanding of infection, prevention and control procedures, including supervising children during hand washing. Children washed their hands at appropriate times and were encouraged to do this independently before mealtimes and after toileting and personal care. This supported staff and children to minimise risks of infection and helped create a safe environment. We encouraged the service to ensure that repairs within the bathroom area were carried out promptly to ensure effective infection, prevention and control could be maintained across the service.

Risk assessments were in place. These were regularly reviewed and updated to ensure any risks were minimised for children, families, and staff. We saw children identifying risks in their spaces and they were supported by staff to note these and carry out any actions. For example, a child had fallen over an outdoor rug and the staff member helped the child to identify a safer place for it to be placed.

Important information about children was kept securely in the office, this was in line with best practice.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had experienced some changes to staffing over the last year and at the time of the inspection there were still three vacant posts. Staff had been working to build relationships, professionalism, respect, and trust within the team and this was ongoing.

Some quality assurance systems and audits had been developed. For example, monitoring accidents and incidents, and risk assessments. We highlighted the need for these to be embedded to support the ongoing health, wellbeing, and safety of the children.

There were gaps in key areas of quality assurance across the service. These included, personal planning approaches, staff interactions with children, quality of the environment and experiences on offer. The service should now develop clear systems to monitor this. Effective quality assurance systems should encourage staff to identify strengths and areas for development. This would ensure quality monitoring and assessment in a focussed and meaningful way. For example, using the Care Inspectorate's 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' as a guide for self-evaluation. This would further support staff to influence change to ensure positive outcomes for all children and their families (see area for improvement 1).

Children's voice had been shared within floorbooks but had not yet been effectively used to lead improvements within the service. There is scope to further involve children and families in evaluating the service and influencing change in a much more meaningful way.

Most staff were committed to their individual leadership roles and taking this forward. For example, staff had been developing digital learning. This was in the early stages and we suggested that clear action plans could be developed and shared with the wider staff team. This would better enable staff to measure the impact of these roles.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff communicated well with each other, and they were respectful, supportive and flexible. This helped to create a caring and welcoming environment for children.

We acknowledged that staffing levels had been a challenge across the service, priority had been given to ensuring that children were safe and well cared for. As a result, part time staff had worked extra hours to ensure ratios were always met and to provide consistency of care to children. This model of operation was not sustainable in the long term and could impact the health and wellbeing of the team. Leaders had recognised this, and recruitment was a priority.

Staff deployed themselves in a way that supported children's individual needs. Interactions were carefully considered to add value and enhance children's play and learning.

Communication with families at drop off and pick up was a strength and this supported positive relationships. Staff shared information with families about their children's day. This could be further supported by more frequent updates to children's online learning journals as this would support families to be more included in their child's learning.

As children were engaged in play for prolonged periods we suggested to the service that staff's time could be managed more effectively through monitoring staff practice and carrying out some aspects of quality assurance. This would help to support self-evaluation and improve outcomes for children and families.

We found that induction processes were insufficient to support new staff within the service and there were some missed opportunities to support newer staff. For example, there was no formal mentoring system in place. Although staff did tell us they could ask any member of staff for support we found that new staff were working through the national induction resource in isolation. The provider should ensure that all new staff receive a robust and supportive induction. To ensure staff have the right skills, knowledge and understanding to support children within their care.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: adequate

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

Requirement

By 1 August 2025, the provider must ensure that all children have a personal plan which sets out how their individual needs will be met, as well as their wishes and choices.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure that all staff understand the purpose of personal plans and are familiar with Care Inspectorate guidance 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare'
- b) ensure that personal plans are written and regularly reviewed with children and parents (at least every six months or sooner if required) to ensure that information is up to date to reflect children's current needs, wishes and choices
- c) ensure consistent effective recording of important information in all personal plans
- d) ensure that all personal plans are meaningful, working documents that supports children's care and include strategies of support and progress made.

This is to comply with Regulation 5(2)(b)(c) (Personal Plans) 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 state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

Area for improvement

To support and sustain continuous improvement throughout the service and to improve the quality of children's experiences. Senior leaders and staff should develop and embed effective and robust quality assurance processes to evaluate all aspects of their service.

These processes should identify strengths, areas for development, and support continuous improvement of the service, placing high quality play at the heart of their improvement planning. This is to ensure management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice". (HSCS 4.11) and "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes." (HSCS 4.19)

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.