

Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting shared inspection report

South Park Nursery

South Lanarkshire Council

20 January 2026

In November 2025, a team of inspectors from HM inspectors of Education and the Care Inspectorate visited South Park Nursery. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

Key inspection findings

- Staff in the nursery know children and families very well. There are very positive, caring, nurturing relationships between staff and children. This results in children who are happy, confident, enthusiastic and enables them to thrive.
- Staff provide a wide range of high-quality, exciting learning opportunities that support children to make very good progress.
- Personal plans were child-centred and developed in partnership with families and other professionals, supporting children to reach their full potential.
- Staff skills, knowledge, and values created a strong team culture where everyone worked collaboratively to deliver positive outcomes for children and families.
- Very good staff deployment ensured positive outcomes for children and families.
- To promote children's health and wellbeing, processes for medication administration and auditing should be strengthened.

HM Inspectors and the Care Inspectorate gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the setting's work using four quality indicators from [the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors](#).

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	very good
Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
Nurturing, care and support	good
Children's progress	very good

Summary of inspection findings

Key contextual Information

South Park Nursery is situated within South Park Primary School in the area of Murray, East Kilbride. There are two playrooms, one with access to the outdoor area. There are additional spaces used for sleep and lunch. Children access 1140 hours of early learning childcare (ELC) between 8.50 am and 2.50 pm five days a week during term time. The setting is registered for a maximum of 44 children aged two to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. Parents have the option to pay for places for two-year-olds. There are currently 34 children on the roll. The acting headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery and is the named manager. The nursery team leader has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the setting. The wider team includes eight early years practitioners and one early year's support worker.

Leadership: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children benefited from a long-standing staff team with a wide range of skills and experience. They were highly skilled in child development and used trauma-informed

and nurturing approaches. This had a positive impact on children's experiences. Staff were sensitive to children's needs and interacted with care and compassion, which helped children to thrive.

Staff had access to a wide range of opportunities to support their professional learning and development. They completed evidence-based training, including Froebel practices, trauma awareness, and nurture approaches. Management valued staff development and spent dedicated time with them through regular meetings such as professional reviews and wellbeing sessions. These meetings helped staff plan their development in line with their needs and the nursery improvement plan. They were strength-focused and placed a strong emphasis on wellbeing. This meant staff felt valued and supported to work towards shared goals, delivering high-quality outcomes for children and families.

Staff and management were reflective about their practice. They had regular opportunities to meet as a team and reflect using best practice guidance. This happened informally at the end of each day and during planned meetings. Staff told us they valued the protected time and support from management, which positively influenced practice. They used Care Inspectorate guidance such as 'Me, My Family and My ELC Setting' and 'SIMOA' (safe, inspect, monitor, observe, act) to support their reflections. As a result, children experienced nurturing, safe care and support in a setting that valued children's rights, parental contributions and positive relationships.

Leaders recognised the importance of deploying staff appropriately to meet children's needs. This was particularly evident at busy key times such as arrival and mealtimes. Families and staff gave positive feedback about welcome time. One family member said, 'I feel so welcome; it's great as it's nice and relaxed.' A staff member shared, 'we have really good connections with families and parents, we feel very connected.' Well planned staff deployment meant children and families received the support they needed, positive relationships were built and maintained, and continuity of care was provided throughout the session.

Communication among staff was strong. A team leader supported and led the team effectively, working collaboratively and respectfully. They engaged well with the inspection and worked alongside staff, carrying out tasks that ensured the service was well led. The team communicated clearly and adapted flexibly to meet children's needs. For example, as children moved around the setting or required individualised support, staff shared information promptly. This teamwork enabled everyone to work together to provide safe, supportive care, play, and learning experiences for children.

Children play and learn: Learning, teaching and assessment

Staff have strong relationships and secure attachments with all children. All staff provide a calm, happy, and purposeful learning environment. As a result, children feel valued, safe, and secure. This strong sense of belonging enables children to engage confidently in play, both independently and alongside their peers. Highly skilled and caring staff provide sensitive individualised support and ensure that all children experience success in their learning.

Older children actively support younger children to learn. They encourage and help each other in a fun and caring manner. Staff provide a wide range of challenging resources that promote creativity and curiosity. Almost all children are highly motivated and excited as they explore experiences relating to their interests for example, experimenting with animals frozen in ice. As a result, almost all children remain focused on their learning for extended periods of time.

Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of early learning pedagogy and child development. They give all children time and space to develop their skills and respond sensitively to their individual needs and interests. For example, staff are highly effective as they support children to use clay. They provide a wide range of tools and demonstrate skills for children to create their models at their own pace. Children's learning is enriched through real-life experiences in the local community, such as visits to the local park. Staff have plans in place to reintroduce visits to the forest area.

All staff interact with children in a respectful and responsive manner. They reinforce the language of children's rights in daily practice through conversations. Younger children benefit from experiences tailored to their age and stage of development. Staff use high-quality questioning, commentary, and modelling to extend learning and actively encourage independence. Children's unique skills are valued and built upon. They are empowered to talk about their learning. Digital technology is used effectively for example, through interactive boards to explore early number concepts. Staff should now provide a wider range of digital experiences to further enhance children's learning.

Staff are highly skilled as they observe children and gather detailed evidence of children's significant learning to make accurate judgements of their progress. This reliable evidence builds a holistic picture of the child and is recorded on an online platform. Children's progress is captured within a learning journal. Staff should continue to involve children in planning their learning and what they would like to learn next. This should enhance children's motivation and engagement in their learning further.

Staff meet regularly to plan for children's learning. Planning is both responsive, intentional and of a high quality. Staff plan very effectively to help children learn

about their rights and develop a range of skills aligned with the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and national practice guidance. Staff successfully capture and value the child's voice throughout planning. Staff involve families very well in learning through regular 'stay and play' sessions. This helps families understand better the skills and knowledge children develop through learning experiences. Staff should provide further opportunities for families to be involved in their child's learning and plan next steps together.

Senior leaders provide highly effective support to staff as they monitor and track children's progress in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. The recently introduced digital tracking system helps staff to demonstrate children's progress over time clearly and identify children who require additional support. Staff should embed this approach to ensure consistency and continue to improve outcomes for all children.

Children are supported to achieve: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children received warm, caring, and nurturing support from staff, who understood each child's individual needs. Staff provided respectful care during routines such as dressing and personal care. They asked children if they needed help and promoted independence through praise and encouragement. This approach helped children feel valued and supported their rights and wellbeing.

All children had a personal plan based on wellbeing indicators: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included. Plans were created with parents and reviewed regularly. They recorded preferences, routines, likes, and dislikes, and identified areas of support with strategies to help children reach their potential. Staff worked with families, schools, and professionals to agree timely interventions. We suggested that staff record dates of children's achievements and changing needs into personal plans. This would help staff track children's progress and plan any next steps needed. Overall, plans contained key information to help staff respond quickly and compassionately to changes in a child's life.

Mealtimes were relaxed and nurturing. Staff and children sat together, creating a homely atmosphere. Children helped prepare snacks and set tables with flowers and real crockery, supporting independence and responsibility. Staff supervised and supported children as needed, while encouraging conversation. Children served their own food and drinks, building confidence and social skills. Staff were aware of allergies and preferences. We concluded mealtimes promoted independence and positive relationships.

We identified issues with medication storage and record-keeping, including missing signatures, dates, and instructions. One child's emergency medication was unavailable, creating potential risk. When we shared this with the management team they responded promptly, and by the final day of inspection, all emergency medication was in place and records were updated. Some medication records were also scheduled to be reviewed with families. We were satisfied that this was a positive step in ensuring positive outcomes for children. We recommended ongoing management audits and monitoring to ensure consistent practice to support children's health and wellbeing (see area for Improvement 1).

Staff had built strong, trusting relationships with families, creating an inclusive and welcoming ethos. Parents were invited into the nursery at the start and end of sessions, allowing informal conversations about children's experiences and needs. Engagement was strengthened through play and stay sessions, home links, and transition programmes. This supported children's wellbeing, promoted positive attachments, and fostered a sense of community between home, nursery, and school.

Areas for improvement 1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure medication is stored and administered safely. This should include but not be limited to regular management monitoring of medication storage and administration.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

Children are supported to achieve: Children's progress

Almost all children make very good progress across almost all aspects of their learning and development. They benefit from the well-planned, high-quality, motivating learning experiences on offer. Staff sensitively support younger children, including those new to the setting, to progress in their own individual way. As a result, almost all children are highly independent, enthusiastic and confident learners.

Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Staff regularly promote the importance of health and wellbeing through interactions and carefully considered learning experiences. Staff support children to make healthy food choices as children plan and prepare snack. Their voice and drawings are recorded daily in a floor book. As a result, all children are able to articulate to staff what healthy food they would like for snack. Almost all children are able to confidently share their emotions. Children have access to a well-equipped outdoor space. They run, climb and jump very well as they develop their gross motor skills.

Almost all children develop their early language and literacy and numerical skills very well across a range of imaginary and real-life experiences. Almost all children

regularly use the home corner to develop their language and communication skills. During play a few children could write their name and are attempting to write other words. Almost all children's drawings show increasing detail as they mark make using a wide range of resources. Almost all children can identify numbers up to 10, with a few recognising and using numbers beyond 10, as they explore number lines and games. Almost all children are confident using mathematical language as they problem solve, build structures and experiment in the creative area.

Staff track children's learning in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. Staff use this tracking information very effectively to identify individual learning targets for each child. Staff use the data to provide experiences which are carefully designed for individuals and groups of children. This includes experiences that help children to develop their knowledge of numeracy concepts. This has a positive impact on children's progress in numeracy.

Children's individual successes are valued and recognised through children receiving celebration certificates. Children contribute confidently towards the life of the setting as they risk assess outdoors, care for plants and make bread for snack. Children happily take on leadership roles within the school as reading representatives and tour guides. Staff should continue to encourage families to share children's achievements and skills outwith the setting. This should inform planning more effectively to build on children's prior learning and enable them to make sustained progress.

Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic context in which children and families live. They know their families very well. Staff are proactive as they gather a wide range of data and use this skilfully and promptly to identify children who require additional targeted support or challenge. They plan and evaluate this support carefully and sensitively with families and partners to ensure improved outcomes and progress for identified groups of children.

Safeguarding(HMIE)

- Inspectors discussed safeguarding and child protection information provided by the ELC setting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the ELC setting and the education authority.

Outcome of inspection

We are confident that the ELC setting has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

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