

# Kirktonholme Primary School Nursery Class

## Day Care of Children

Dornoch Place  
West Mains  
East Kilbride  
Glasgow  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
30 August 2023

**Service provided by:**  
South Lanarkshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003481

**Service no:**  
CS2003015304

## About the service

Kirktonholme Primary School Nursery Class is a daycare of children service provided by South Lanarkshire Council and located in the West Mains area of East Kilbride. It is close to public transport links and local amenities. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 40 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided from the nursery wing of Kirktonholme Primary School. Playrooms have direct access to a large outdoor play area, which children can independently access throughout the day. Children also make use of the extensive school grounds to support their outdoor play and learning.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 29 August 2023 between 08:30 and 16:15. We concluded the inspection on Wednesday 30 August 2023 when we also gave inspection feedback to the management team. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was also present as part of the Care Inspectorate's quality assurance process.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with some of the children and four parents/carers. We also reviewed survey responses from 25 parents.
- Spoke with the service manager, depute and seven staff. We also reviewed survey responses from seven staff.
- Observed practice and staff interactions with children.
- Reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were happy and settled within the service. They were confident in seeking support because of the positive relationships they had formed with staff.
- Children had fun during their play and could choose from toys and resources to support their learning. Staff should continue to introduce more open ended materials to the playroom, to build on children's creativity and natural curiosity.
- Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They knew children well and worked closely with parents and carers to ensure their needs were being met effectively.
- More robust monitoring systems will ensure consistency in the quality of written records and contribute to sustained improvement across the setting.
- Very good staff retention and staff support ensured a staff team who worked well together in delivering high quality experiences for children.

## From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### **Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.**

Children were observed to be happy and settled within the setting. They were confident in seeking support because of the positive relationships they had formed with staff. Staff were responsive and nurturing toward children, listening carefully to their ideas. Keyworker groups helped children form attachments and to feel safe and secure within the setting. Staff were respectful and friendly toward each other, welcoming families and visitors, which modelled positive relationships for children. As a result, some children had formed close friendships with their friends that helped them understand turn taking and to respect and listen to the needs of others.

We sampled the different elements of children's personal plans and found staff and parents worked closely together to plan children's care and support, their wellbeing and development. Parents strongly agreed that staff knew their child well, including what they liked and what was important for their care. Parents' comments about support for their children included, "Amazing nursery with amazing staff who are so caring towards the children. They treat each child individually and always show their kindness."

When needed, staff also worked closely with other professionals to identify appropriate next steps for children, who would benefit from individualised support strategies. Comments from link professionals included, "I think the nursery staff are creative in their approach to meeting learners' needs and I think they work hard to foster good relationships with parents/carers." and "Staff are very open to being upskilled and management always facilitate my time with key workers and team leaders." This helped ensure all children were included and able to reach their full potential.

Children's personal plans were reviewed at termly meetings however, staff should be vigilant about including parents' signature and dates of review. This should equally apply to any changes to children's medication needs and associated action plans. This will ensure that changes to core information or children's routines are current and relevant to children's needs. At feedback, the management team agreed that providing links between each section of children's personal plans would also provide an holistic overview for parents and any new staff within the playroom. We have made monitoring records an area for improvement under 'How good is our leadership'. This is to make sure children's individual wellbeing benefits from the effective use of personal planning.

The school community was committed within their improvement plan to create a nurturing ethos. Towards this, the setting had recognised that children's lunchtime experience could be improved. For example, it was good practice that children chose a table centrepiece to stimulate discussion among their keyworker group during lunch. We would have liked children to be afforded more opportunities to be independent and learn life skills through helping set the table and serve lunch. We agreed with staff plans to continue to research and reflect on how best to make mealtimes a positive social experience for children.

Children were safe and protected from harm due to the clear child protection systems that the setting had in place. Staff appreciated the range of professional development activities offered, which suited their learning styles and made sure their knowledge and understanding about safeguarding children was embedded. For example, staff had been using the key messages from the Care Inspectorate's safety campaign, 'Keeping

Children Safe - Look, Think, Act' (SIMOA) in a meaningful way with children. They had also shared SIMOA with their colleagues in the wider school. The SIMOA campaign helps keep children safe by raising awareness of how, and why, they could leave a childcare setting without a responsible adult. The approach contributed to children's safety and wellbeing.

### **Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

We observed children having fun as they independently explored play experiences and resources that were reflective of their abilities and interests. There was a good balance of adult led and free play experiences for children, where children's voice was valued by staff. Staff encouraged children to be independent and make choices about where they played. One child commented, "I love playing outside and doing water play. I love being able to play with all my friends and all of the ladies are so great."

Children's opportunities to develop language, literacy and numeracy were evident in the wall displays and we observed staff naturally introducing counting, sorting and matching, for example during snack time. Staff used puppets in their stories and familiar songs to support children's enjoyment of language in a fun way while also developing their talking and listening skills.

We observed instances where staff supported children's higher order thinking skills through their conversational style and questioning. Staff intimated this was an area they would like to develop and were looking forward to planned training. This was linked to the improvement plan priority of developing questioning to increase the quality of staff interactions with children. Staff shared their progress in developing their approach to child led planning, "This session we are looking at a new way to involve children with their own target setting. At the moment we use our progress week, blooms button, verbal children's feedback, personal and group learning journals."

Keyworker floor books highlighted how staff listened to children's views and used these to plan for activities that would motivate children to be curious about learning more. This empowered children to have confidence in their ideas and feel a sense of achievement. We noted that staff used individual trackers, based on the early level of the Curriculum for Excellence, to demonstrate how children were progressing and to plan how to motivate them to reach their full potential. Management agreed that it would be beneficial for this information to be incorporated into children's individual learning folders, so that everyone could see from children's learning story how evaluations had been made.

Staff were respectful of parents' roles as key partners in their children's care and learning. Staff regularly shared and exchanged information using an online learning platform, emails, telephone calls and chats during children's handover times. We could see from displays that parents were encouraged to share their children's home experiences so that the setting could share their interests and achievements. In our survey, most parents strongly agreed that they were fully involved and informed about their child's learning and development. Parents particularly valued the 'stay and play' sessions where they could find out about children's activities and achievements. Their comments included, "I particularly enjoy the regular 'stay and play' events which gives me the opportunity to see inside the nursery and go through my little boy's amazing learning journal that is full of learning experiences from across the curriculum. The topics covered in the past year have been great and my little boy loves when he gets to vote and be involved in the learning experiences decision making."

## How good is our setting?

## 4 - Good

### Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The service was provided from a self contained wing of a purpose built school, where a secure entry system was well managed by staff to maintain children's safety. Shared facilities such as the school gym, lunch hall and playground gave children a sense of community while also supporting their onward transition to school. The whole setting was bright and clean with good quality child sized furniture and equipment. This gave children a clear message that they were welcome and that their comfort was important.

The design of the accommodation enabled children to be independent and make choices. For example children had free flow access from the playroom to the outdoors, which supported their health and wellbeing, physical development and confidence in risk taking. We could see that staff had worked with parents to develop the outdoor area and introduced open ended materials and loose parts, including a mud kitchen and an area for children to enjoy planting. 'Loose parts' are everyday natural or recycled items that have no fixed purpose, children are free to use them imaginatively in self directed play. For example, we observed children's sense of wonder in nature playing with the wormery, and building an obstacle course with planks and a spool where they tested their gross motor skills. Within our survey parents frequently commented about children's opportunities for outdoor play being a strength of the setting, one said, "The choice of materials is excellent and the water features and building of a shed are fantastic for the children."

Although children were confident in using loose parts outdoors, we would have liked to see more open-ended materials indoors. This would boost children's natural curiosity and build on their problem solving skills. The management team agreed this could be enhanced by decluttering the playroom. This is because too many resources out at a time can be overwhelming for some children rather than promoting choice and challenge. Further consideration to the layout of the playroom would also contribute to more relaxed and peaceful cosy spaces for children, free from avoidable and intrusive noise.

Children's safety was promoted through risk assessments for all areas and activities accessed by them. Children themselves had been involved in risk assessing their play area so that they were developing analytical skills and taking responsibility for their own safety. The service provider had an effective system for reporting any repairs or faults and we could see that these were generally actioned in a timely manner. A faulty fire door in the staff room had been reported but not immediately addressed, we advised that this be prioritised. Effective fire prevention measures will contribute to everyone's safety. This matter was immediately taken forward by the management team.

Children's risk of cross infection was reduced through effective ventilation within the setting and regular cleaning as well as staff modelling and supporting children's hand hygiene at appropriate times. However, we advised that alcoholic hand sanitiser was not suitable for children aged under five years. We referred the management team to guidance from Health Protection Scotland (HPS). HPS advises that where there is no running water, hand wipes can be used. If wipes are being used in situations where running water is not available, it is recommended that hands are washed with soap and water at the earliest opportunity. The hand sanitiser had been removed from the playroom by the end of our inspection visit. This supported children's continued health, safety and wellbeing.

## How good is our leadership?

## 4 - Good

**Quality Indicator 4.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The vision, values and aims were shared with the whole school to enable a sense of community and ownership among everyone. Children took pride in the value that 'learning is the heart of Kirktonholme' and staff had supported their understanding of how this related to them. For example children had helped create a 'captain's code' of acceptable behaviour, giving them a sense of respect and inclusion.

The setting had a clear management structure with the school head teacher as the registered manager, the depute taking responsibility for the early level and a team leader supporting day to day running of the setting, including support for staff. The management team had worked together to create conditions where everyone felt empowered to initiate change and share responsibility for the process. Staff told us that the management team was very supportive and promoted an open-door approach that enabled them to have informal discussions about their practice and development.

Individual staff had taken on leadership roles that allowed them to focus on and drive forward initiatives they felt passionate about, such as children's outdoor experiences. Staff were encouraged to contribute to the whole school improvement plan and were meaningfully involved in self evaluation of the setting using national benchmarks such as 'How good is our early learning and childcare', 'Realising the Ambition: being me' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare'. This contributed to staff feeling valued, respected and included within the setting. During our feedback to the management team, we discussed how they could make sure that any identified nursery improvement priorities and progress were not diluted within the wider school improvement plans. This would allow areas for development and achievements to be identified more effectively.

A variety of communication methods were in place to suit families' needs and preferences. This included newsletters, noticeboards, emails and a secure online platform. Parents were regularly consulted and their views surveyed to influence changes within the setting. As a result, parents felt welcomed and confident in approaching the setting. For example parents were invited into the setting for themed 'stay and play' sessions and children's progress meetings. Parents in our survey strongly agreed they were confident the service was well managed, supported by comments such as, "We are asked for regular feedback after stay and play, parents evenings, trips etc - the staff are grateful for feedback and take things on board." Only one parent disagreed that they and their child were involved in a meaningful way to help develop this setting. Parents and carers had not entered the playroom at the beginning and end of the day since pandemic restrictions. We encouraged management and staff to keep this practice under review, as widening parental involvement can ensure they feel valued as active participants in the life of the setting. Involving parents daily in a meaningful way can help to strengthen relationships and provide opportunities to share information that supports meeting children's needs.

Monitoring of the setting had been undertaken by the management team, however we found that these quality assurance processes could be more focussed to ensure that records that services must keep were in order. For example, in previous sections we have highlighted monitoring the holistic approach to children's personal plans, and monitoring the impact of the environment on the quality of children's experiences (see area for improvement 1).

We were confident of the service capacity to implement our suggested improvements in order to ensure positive outcomes for children.

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that outcomes for children and families continuously improve, the manager and staff should ensure that effective and robust systems are in place to monitor and sustain a quality service. This will contribute to children and families experiencing consistently positive outcomes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

### Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The service provider had safe recruitment practices in place that included a clear induction programme so that any new staff felt welcomed and understood their role. This was confirmed by the newest member of staff, who told us they felt a valued member of the team. For example there was a mentoring system in place where more staff supported trainees or newer members of staff. This contributed to them feeling confident in meeting the individual needs of children. We encouraged management and staff to make more explicit use of the national induction resource so that everyone was familiar with Scottish Government's expectations of national standards for early learning and childcare.

The setting had an extremely low turnover in staff. Very good staff retention and staff support ensured a staff team who worked well together in delivering high quality experiences for children. Staff felt very supported by their manager both informally and formally. For example, there was an open-door approach to discussing personal and professional issues. Regular playroom meetings provided opportunities for staff to reflect together and use these reflections to bring about positive change for children. Staff unable to attend meetings could look at the meeting minutes, which helped them keep up to date with important information, feel included and to ask questions. Staff participated in peer evaluations to critically reflect on how they were supporting positive outcomes for children. This was at an early stage of implementation but made it more likely that children received high quality interactions and activities with staff. Staff comments included, "I am thankful to the team that we have in our setting including leadership. We all work as one for the best outcomes for the children and also have great relationships on a personal level."

We found that staffing levels were appropriate to meet the needs of children. Children's registers and regular tallies ensured that children were accounted for and kept safe. Staff breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. Staff had protected time off the playroom floor for planning and to work collaboratively with others, such as primary one staff and external agencies. This meant staff administrative duties did not impede quality interactions with children during their nursery day.

Throughout our inspection, we observed that staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit children. Staff naturally called on each other for assistance when needed to support the wellbeing and safety of children. Children experience consistency in their care and a warm atmosphere when people have good working relationships.



In our survey, we received positive feedback from 25 parents about the quality of the staff team. Parents' comments about the collaborative approach of staff included, "They always make time for any questions and are truly supportive of the family" and "The staff have been fantastic. Each member of staff is very approachable if I have any questions. They're always smiling and show that they have a real love for what they do. A warm and friendly learning environment is created."

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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