

Blackwood Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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Blackwood
Lanark
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Telephone: 01555 892 438

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 February 2026

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015274

About the service

Blackwood Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care to a maximum for 60 children, aged three to those not yet attending primary school. The service is located in a residential area of Blackwood, Lanark, South Lanarkshire. At the time of the inspection, 42 children were registered with the service.

Children were cared for in one playroom that is situated in the school building. They had access to toilets and an enclosed outdoor garden. The service is close to transport links, primary schools and local shops.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 24 and 25 February 2026 between 09:00 and 17:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- gathered feedback from 11 families through a questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well-maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

During this inspection we gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans, and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- A vision, values and aims was in place, helping to shape the approach to caring for children. We discussed with leaders on ensuring ways to sharing these with children were meaningful.
- The setting had an improvement plan in place that contributed to improving outcomes for children.
- Staff would benefit from meaningful opportunities to reflect on learning from training, to consider the impact this has on their practice and the outcomes for children.
- Children had fun exploring different toys and materials, helping to support their choices and wishes.
- Planning approaches helped staff to provide experiences for children, supporting their learning. Further developing planning to be more responsive, could help children to lead their own learning.
- Mealtimes took place in the playroom, offering a homely experience for children. Children were supported to choose and serve their meals, supporting their preferences and independence.
- Children experienced interactions that were kind and nurturing, helping them to feel safe and secure within the setting.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

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.

Staff worked well together to create a welcoming atmosphere for children. They had developed positive relationships with each other, children and families. A vision, values and aims was in place, helping to influence the approach to caring for children. These emphasised the importance of friendship, respect, equality and determination. Staff used the language of these in everyday practice. For example, recognising children's successes and commenting, "You were so determined to do that." Whilst staff took time to discuss the values with children, consideration could be given to ways they were supported to become familiar with these. This would help ensure these were meaningful to them.

Monitoring systems were in place to track and identify staff training needs. This included mandatory training, such as child protection. Staff one-to-one meetings with leaders took place regularly, to support setting goals and their professional development journeys. Staff had engaged in a variety of training opportunities, to help increase their knowledge and skills to support children's learning, development and overall wellbeing. We discussed staff would benefit from further opportunities to reflect on learning, and how this influences practice and has a positive impact on children. (See area for improvement 1).

An improvement plan in place highlighted the priorities for the year, and included supporting numeracy development and nurturing approaches. This provided opportunities for all staff across the nursery and school to come together, share ideas and engage in professional dialogue, strengthening connections and professional relationships.

Staff had been involved in self-evaluation processes that had taken place, and they had considered 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: early learning and childcare,' to support their thinking and reflections. Families felt they were asked for their views on how the service could make improvements. They told us, "We are regularly asked to fill out questionnaires on what we like, or what can be improved" and "We have opportunities to give suggestions and feedback."

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's learning, development and wellbeing, the provider should ensure staff have opportunities to reflect on training. This could help ensure they reflect on learning, and review the impact this has on their practice, supporting good outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled." (HSCS 3.14).

Children play and learn 4 - Good**Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing.**

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 enjoyed exploring spaces and resources within the setting to support their learning. For example, block play, using technology, play dough and arts and crafts. They welcomed staff engagement during play, and staff supported children's learning through interactions and discussions. Such as, asking questions to support children's problem solving skills and at other times, supporting their imagination. Children told us they liked "Playing with my friends and the [staff]" and "This is the art area, this where you can craft. I like drawing" and "I am drawing a picture. It's a spotty one. It has grey, red, green and blue on it."

Children had opportunities to enhance their learning and life skills. Such as forest explorations and woodwork. During these experiences, staff interacted with children in a nurturing way, to support understanding and development. For example, discussing minibeasts. Whilst we recognised there were a variety of working patterns, this meant these experiences were not always available. Leaders should review the availability of these opportunities, to ensure these are more regularly available and meaningful to support children's learning.

Planning systems were in place, to help staff provide experiences that supported children's development and learning. We discussed reviewing these to ensure responsive approaches were more evident. This could further enhance children's opportunities to lead their own learning, deepen their thinking and support their interests and needs.

A tracking and monitoring system was in place to record children's progress. This helped staff to identify where children needed support or more challenge. We acknowledged the importance of tracking and monitoring of children's learning, such as mark making, counting and wellbeing. Consideration could be given to the method used to track children's early mark making. This is to ensure this reflects early years guidance and research.

The use of technology helped children to develop an understanding of concepts, supporting literacy and numeracy. This included motorised toys and using the smart board, to engage with counting and numbers. Children accessed stories and staff read to children when books naturally peaked their interests, helping to support a love for books, supporting language and new ideas. Staff provided 'Bookbug' sessions for children and families, helping to support family connections and literacy development.

Children benefited from moving between indoors and outdoors, helping to support their choices and wishes. They enjoyed playing in the mud, digging and exploring textures, with staff using language such as "squish" and "squash" to support their experiences and develop language. Parents commented positively on outdoor opportunities and told us, "My [child] loves the outdoors, and they have so much to play with outdoors." "The nursery has an outdoor play area and a forest, where they have the opportunity to play and learn," and "My [child] loves playing outdoors. They are outdoors in all weathers, and the nursery have welly boots and waterproofs."

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality indicator: 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 were happy and settled in the service. Staff interacted in a kind, nurturing and supportive way, helping children feel safe and secure. Parents told us, "The staff are nurturing towards my [child], and always have [their] best interests at heart. I am kept well-informed about [their] day and [they are] happy there" and "The staff are so friendly, caring and supportive."

Staff used encouragement and natural praise to recognise children's day to day achievements, helping them to feel valued and supported. We discussed with leaders on reviewing best practice guidance and research on the use of more formal rewards. Such as, the use of certificates and stickers. Consideration could be given to the impact that these can have on children's self-esteem and confidence, if they don't receive a reward. Further opportunities for staff to engage in meaningful training, and reflecting on learning could support reviewing this. Such as, 'Froebel' training.

Personal plans were in place for children, and contained information to help staff meet individual needs. This included children's likes and preferences and family details. These could be reviewed to ensure information is recorded consistently across the service, with clear information. For example, partnership working with families, and working with external agencies.

Mealtimes took place in the nursery playroom, helping to support a homely and relaxing experience. Children were able to choose and serve their food options, contributing to their independence and supported their choices. They were able to have lunch when they were ready and hungry, reflecting their needs. We shared some suggestions with leaders on reviewing mealtimes, to reduce staff movement and noise levels. This would help increase opportunities for natural conversations, supporting speech and language development and wellbeing check ins. In addition, this would help support supervision and safe eating.

Parents were welcomed into the setting when dropping off or collecting their children, and this offered an opportunity for staff and parents to engage in conversations on children's experiences. Termly newsletters and information was sent to parents, providing them with information such as, staffing information, upcoming events, children's rights and parent engagement experiences. In addition, families were welcomed into the session for stay and play sessions, as well as 'Bookbug' events. This helps contribute to strong connections between children, families and staff. Parents commented, "I always feel welcome at the nursery, and have been able to join for various stay and play activities" and "Everyone is so welcoming when walking into nursery."

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

Blackwood Primary School Nursery should ensure that food allergen information is provided, as advised by the Food Standards Agency guidance. National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2: A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2017.

Action taken since then

The provider ensured information was shared with parents to share allergen information on meals provided by the service. There were measures in place for children who have allergies, and children confidently told us about these. Snack options included fruit, and this was displayed on the whiteboard in the cloakroom. Staff were aware of allergies and measures in place to manage these.

Therefore, this area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Blackwood Primary School Nursery Class should provide appropriate resources, in line with current guidance Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings. National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2017.

Action taken since then

Staff were observed to be cleaning surfaces, regular handwashing and the overall environment was clean and well-maintained. Bathrooms were clean with plenty of items, such as toilet roll and soap. Nappy changing units were being replaced, to provide staff with more space to move and more storage.

Therefore, this area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 3

Blackwood Primary School Nursery should provide appropriate resources, in line with current guidance Infection Prevention and Control in childcare settings. National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 17 December 2014.

Action taken since then

There were appropriate items to support infection prevention and control. Such as gloves and aprons for staff. Soap and paper towels were available to support effective handwashing.

Therefore, this area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 4

Blackwood Primary School Nursery Class should audit accident and incident records and where necessary, take action to reduce future risks. National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 14: Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 17 December 2014.

Action taken since then

Records were in place for accidents and incidents. Monthly audits had been completed to support leaders identify any patterns, and put appropriate measures in place.

Therefore, this area for improvement is met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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