

# Windyknowe Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Windyknowe Crescent  
Bathgate  
EH48 2BT

Telephone: 01506 652 083

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
25 March 2026

**Service provided by:**  
West Lothian Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002601

**Service no:**  
CS2003017503

## About the service

Windyknowe Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 50 children aged from 3 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. It is located in a residential area of Bathgate, West Lothian. Children have access to two playrooms where they can take part in a wide range of high-quality play experiences. There is a well-equipped and fully enclosed outdoor learning environment for children to access throughout their nursery session. Children have regular opportunities to explore their local community. This includes regular visits to nearby woodland and a local care home.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 24 and 25 March 2026 between 09:00 and 16:00. This inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service.

This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke/spent time with children using the service
- received nine completed questionnaires from families using the service
- spoke with families using the service
- spoke with all staff and senior leadership team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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

The service was exceptionally well led, and the dedicated staff team had created a very positive and nurturing ethos.

Leaders used highly effective quality assurance and involved all staff in improvement work, resulting in confident leadership at all levels and a positive impact across the nursery and wider community.

Children enjoyed a wide range of high quality play experiences both indoors and outdoors. They were confident, engaged and empowered to lead their own play and learning.

Staff used warm, responsive interactions to support learning. They knew when to step in to extend thinking and when to give children time and space to explore independently.

Children experienced caring and respectful relationships that helped them feel safe, secure and included. Staff showed genuine care and love, and used wellbeing tools and rights based approaches to support children to understand and express their feelings.

Personal plans were clear and up to date, with strong involvement from families. Staff knew children well and used this information to provide consistent support that met individual needs.

## 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	6 - Excellent
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

## Leadership 6 - Excellent

### Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as excellent where aspects of performance were outstanding and sector leading.

Children benefitted from aspirational and forward thinking leadership within the setting. Leaders had set a clear direction that enabled the newly formed team to establish a warm, nurturing and high quality environment soon after opening in August 2024. They developed a strong sense of shared purpose with children, families and staff. The vision, values and aims of the service had recently been reviewed to reflect what was important to everyone, and this shared understanding. They were clearly embedded and fundamental to the success of delivering highly consistent, rights based practice across the service.

Leaders demonstrated excellent capacity for improvement. Self-evaluation had supported the delivery of consistently high quality care that met the needs of children and families. The leadership team had an excellent understanding that self-evaluation was the responsibility of all. One member of staff told us, "I am actively involved in the self-evaluation of the service. I contribute ideas and feedback on the quality of care, helping to identify strengths and areas for improvement". The positive culture empowered staff to take an active and meaningful role contributing to developments across the service. Their work in areas such as literacy, numeracy, wellbeing, Froebel informed practice and family engagement led to clear, positive improvements for children.

The service played an important role in sharing what they did well with others. Staff had led professional discussions and supported reflections as they shared their approaches across West Lothian. This included presenting at local events and working closely with West Lothian College. This resulted in the highly motivated staff team sharing their high aspirations and strong desire to improve outcomes for children and their families with West Lothian colleagues and the future ELC workforce. The team demonstrated a strong commitment to improving practice beyond their own service.

Leaders maintained a strong and visible presence in the playrooms and provided practical, hands on support. They routinely shared responsibilities with staff and worked directly with children and their families, modelling high quality practice and strengthening positive relationships across the nursery. Staff spoke highly of this approach and described feeling valued, respected and empowered, which contributed to a confident and motivated team who delivered high quality experiences for children. Staff told us that leaders support staff wellbeing. They listen to individual needs, offer guidance when required, and create a positive, supportive environment where staff feel valued. One staff member commented positively, "We have regular check in opportunities to discuss workload, training, professional development and personal issues staff might want to discuss. I feel leaders have an open door ethos and are approachable".

Resources were managed to an excellent standard. Leaders ensured the environment was carefully planned, well organised and rich in opportunities for creativity, exploration and independence. Froebel informed experiences, high quality materials and purposeful outdoor learning empowered children to have fun as they experienced rich and meaningful play at a pace that was right for them.

Staff deployment ensured children were nurtured and very well supported in their play and learning. Staff were deployed in a manner that took account of staff knowledge, skills and experiences to support each other and the children.

Leaders ensured that safety and risk management were exceptionally well managed. Staff applied safe practice consistently, and children were actively involved in assessing risks using child friendly tools. Children were given opportunities to take on leadership roles, including acting as 'little leaders' to support the wider Rights Respecting Schools initiative. These responsibilities, along with helping with daily safety routines, promoted independence, responsibility and a very strong understanding of their right to be safe.

SIMOA was carefully embedded into practice, further enhancing the setting's strong safety culture. Staff used the elephant character in a creative, child friendly and imaginative way to support children's understanding of safety and their right to be safe. This character helped staff open conversations, model safe behaviours and encourage children to think about how they could help protect themselves and others both within the setting and in the wider community.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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 experienced a rich, varied and engaging curriculum that enabled them to lead their own learning with confidence. Throughout the inspection, we saw that children were highly motivated, curious and deeply engaged in play across both the indoor and outdoor environments. Children told us they loved coming to nursery and felt safe and happy. Some comments included:

"I love everything. The teachers, my friends and all the cool activities we do".

"I like the sparkle room and the lunch time. I like my teachers and playing with my friends".

"I get to play with my friends and eat snack and the ladies help keep me safe".

Children moved freely between well designed spaces and made independent choices about where and how they wished to play, resulting in sustained periods of meaningful, purposeful learning.

All staff demonstrated warm, attuned and responsive interactions which supported children's learning extremely well. One parent told us, "The nursery service provides a safe, caring, happy and nurturing environment for children. The staff are friendly and interested in each child's development". Staff skilfully used a variety of techniques such as sustained shared thinking, open ended questioning and sensitive observation to deepen children's curiosity and extend their thinking. Staff were skilled at recognising when to step back to allow uninterrupted play, and when to sensitively intervene to support problem solving, language development or the introduction of new concepts. Peer interactions were consistently positive, with children demonstrating kindness, cooperation and enjoyment in shared experiences.

Planning approaches were firmly centred on children's voices, interests and developmental needs. Staff used Seesaw observations, professional dialogue, family consultation and West Lothian tracking tools to plan meaningful next steps. There was a clear link from observation to assessment to planning, ensuring children were appropriately challenged and well supported in their progress across literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. Staff applied their strong understanding of child development to deliver consistently high quality learning experiences.

Children benefitted from a wide range of stimulating opportunities, including free flow outdoor play, woodland walks, sewing and weaving, woodwork, clay, storytelling experiences and weekly literacy initiatives such as the Big Bedtime Read. Home link opportunities were being further strengthened, with Numeracy Nancy bags in development and planned for implementation soon to extend learning into the home. The environment was well resourced, enabling and inspiring, promoting creativity, independence and exploration.

## Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

### Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of children's verbal and non verbal cues and used this knowledge to provide responsive, attuned support that promoted emotional security and wellbeing. Wellbeing indicator characters were embedded across the setting, helping children understand and articulate feelings. Emotional check ins, such as the Colour Monster area, enabled children to confidently express how they felt and seek help when needed. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was clearly embedded in daily practice. Children were encouraged to express their views, make choices and influence their experiences. Staff used rights based language naturally, helping children understand how their rights connected to their wellbeing. Planned stay and play sessions for families were designed to extend this rights based learning beyond the setting.

Personal plans were current, detailed and meaningful. They reflected children's holistic needs and were created in partnership with families. Reviews took place within required timescales, and staff shared information effectively to ensure continuity of support. All families who responded to our MS Forms survey agreed or strongly agreed that they were fully involved in their child's care, which included developing and reviewing their personal plan. Comments included:

"Even though they are all busy, they are still more than happy to stop and answer any questions you might have. All very friendly and approachable".

"The staff are a credit to the school. They provide a safe, caring and welcoming environment and provide a learning experience that challenges and supports my child. They are always available to discuss anything and show a genuine interest and knowledge of my child and their likes/dislikes etc".

For children with additional support needs, plans contained clear strategies and showed evidence of strong collaboration with external partners. Tailored risk assessments, including barefoot play, further reflected the setting's responsive approach. A helpful next step would be to create a single support strategy folder to strengthen continuity during staff absence or when supply staff were present.

Daily routines were calm, respectful and unhurried. Mealtimes promoted independence, choice and social interaction, with children able to access free flow breakfast and snack in line with their own needs. Children also regularly took part in meaningful experiences such as baking bread for lunch, which supported confidence, life skills and a sense of contribution. Across all personal care routines, staff upheld children's dignity and worked sensitively to ensure every child felt valued and included.

Partnerships with families were warm, purposeful and consistent. Seesaw updates, consultations, PEEP Talk groups, stay and play sessions and a planned engagement timetable ensured that families were welcomed, informed and involved in their child's learning. These approaches strengthened relationships and enhanced children's experiences. For example, staff shared activities from the PEEP Talk sessions, supporting families to develop their listening and talking skills with their children. As parents used these ideas at home, children experienced more opportunities for conversation, which helped reinforce and extend their learning.

## 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

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>6 - Excellent</b>
Leadership and management of staff and resources	6 - Excellent
<b>Children play and learn</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
<b>Children are supported to achieve</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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