

New Monkland Primary Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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North Lanarkshire Council

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CS2003015374

About the service

New Monkland Primary Nursery Class is a day care of children service provided by North Lanarkshire Council, and is part of the New Monkland Primary School community. The setting is registered to provide care to a maximum of 44 children aged three years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. The children are cared for across two play rooms and an enclosed outdoor space.

The service is located in the village of Glenmavis, close to Airdrie, in North Lanarkshire. It is the only nursery in the area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 and 23 April 2025 between the hours of 08:30 and 16:00, feedback was provided on 24 April 2025. 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 and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with most children present on the days we visited using the service.
- Gathered the feedback from eight family members of children using the service through our questionnaires.
- Spoke directly with four family members of children who attend the nursery.
- Spoke with staff and management present on the days we visited the service.
- Gathered written feedback from seven staff using a survey.
- Observed staff practice and children's experiences on the days of our visit.
- Reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have 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

- Children were happy, confident and had some opportunities to lead their play and learning.
- The manager and staff were committed to the ongoing development of the service.
- The nursery is part of the wider community and children access local amenities regularly.
- Personal planning for each child should be further developed, to ensure the goals set are suitable for their stage of development and truly show their progress.
- The environment would benefit from more visual prompts being available throughout, to support communication and language development.
- Children benefited from a wide range of indoor and outdoor play resources, which provided opportunity for learning activities throughout the setting.
- The nursery was welcoming and supported strong partnerships between the setting and the wider community.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated different parts of this key question as good and adequate, with an overall grade of adequate. While strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and kind interactions from staff which supported them to feel safe and secure. Staff used their knowledge of the children and provided opportunities based on their interests. This allowed children to explore resources independently with staff joining them in play when appropriate, helping children to become confident in a safe and secure environment.

Staff knew the care and support needs, preferences and routines for the majority of the children attending. Written personal planning information was inconsistent and did not always provide clear support strategies, meaning staff sometimes lacked the detailed information necessary for ensuring continuity of care. These plans could be further personalised by more actively incorporating children's voices into their play experiences. For children with significant needs, the service successfully implemented comprehensive plans and demonstrated strong, effective collaboration with partner agencies. The service also committed to reviewing its practice of displaying children's learning in the nursery environment and were planning to adopt alternative methods that respected children's rights.

Children benefited from high quality lunchtime experiences which promoted opportunities to develop their independence and skills for life, along with positive eating habits through its "loving lunches" approach. This development in response to findings in previous report, clearly had a significant impact, as evidenced by positive parent feedback: "I love how it's a buffet style lunch where children are encouraged to try new food" and "This has also had an impact on [what my child is] eating at home which we are very grateful for". While lunchtime was a distinct strength, snack times could be further developed to encourage independence and enhance learning opportunities such as, self serving or spreading their own toast.

Observations indicated that whilst children were able to make their needs known to staff, the practices around name usage required attention to better support children's sense of self and belonging. Children referred to most adults as "teacher". We asked the children if they knew the names of the staff caring for them, some knew whilst others did not. Additionally, children would benefit from a staff team who consistently refer to them by their names. Addressing these issues was important to enhance the children's personal and emotional development and reinforce their overall sense of safety and community.

The nursery was proactive in their approach to transitions and settling-in, which clearly benefited the children. Transition to primary one is introduced early in the children's experiences. The school and nursery established a strong sense of community where resources are shared and nursery children could access the school premises, such as the gym hall and cooking kitchen. New children were supported to settle into the nursery through a buddy system, which allowed children to feel safe and secure and developed the interpersonal skills of the children identified as buddies

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

While staff interacted warmly with children, they missed opportunities to extend learning from play.

This highlighted that targeted professional development would be beneficial to equip staff with the skills needed to effectively identify, engage with, and extend learning as it emerged in children's play. The leadership team had identified this as a focus for their service improvement plan. Staff were improving their skills, and while this was still at an early stage, progress had been made. The foundation was set for further learning, which will provide staff with the opportunity to grow and develop.

At times, children's play was unnecessarily interrupted by staff for adult led activities such as arts and crafts and story time. On one of these occasions, children were asked to put their hands on their heads, to show they were listening. Staff should consider how such interactions impact on children's play.

Children in the smaller playroom did not have direct access to outdoors, and there were no visual cues to remind them of this choice. As a result, we did not see any children access the outdoor space from this area. The lack of easy access and reminders meant these children experienced fewer opportunities for these learning experiences. Consideration should be given to how children in this area can freely access outdoors.

The nursery supported children's early literacy and numeracy development by providing access to text and numbers throughout the setting. Books in various areas helped children link the written word to the world around them. To further support children's language and communication skills, the service should ensure that visual prompts are available in all areas of the nursery, as detailed in some of the children's personal plans.

The nursery made effective use of the community resources available to them such as, exploring the woodland and visiting the local shops. Parents told us they valued the wide range of experiences the nursery offered. By actively organising outings and distributing woodland bags, the nursery demonstrated a clear aim, to provide enriching experiences beyond the setting and ensured fair access for all children. This strengthened the connection between the nursery, the community and the families, nurturing a more holistic and inclusive learning environment. This was a real strength for the setting.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2 How good is our setting?

The nursery maintained a safe and secure environment for all children. Appropriate risk assessments were in place and improvements had been made to the internal door security by adding an alarm. This was in response to a child leaving the nursery into the adjoining school building. Leaders told us the child was observed by staff who ensured they were safe at all times. This shows that the service was focused on strengthening the measures already in place to keep children safe.

We saw through photographs displayed on the walls, that the children had been introduced to the concept of safety and their responsibility that is involved in this. We suggested that the setting continues to develop the children's awareness of risk management, to provide them with the skills and knowledge to identify and assess risk from a personal perspective.

The service provided quiet and cosy areas, enabling children to regulate their emotions when required; for instance, one child was observed resting quietly and observing others at play. To further enrich children's play experiences, the spaces available should be appropriate for the activity and interest.

A larger block play space, for example, would reduce the frustrations we observed as children struggled for space to be creative. Opening up spaces and not duplicating resources such as, the play dough area would enhance children's free-flow access to a broader range of activities.

Effective infection prevention and control procedures were in place, and the provision of well-maintained toilet and changing facilities demonstrated that the nursery met children's basic physical needs, in a clean and appropriate manner. These measures successfully contributed to establishing a safe and healthy environment for the young children.

The nursery had a good variety of activities and was well resourced. We discussed where children's play and learning could be further improved, by introducing more challenging resources and making it easier for children to access the materials they needed, to extend their play. Having these opportunities could lead to children learning more, through their own interests.

It was clear the nursery was committed to keeping children safe both in the nursery and when out in the community, through their use of risk assessments, which were reviewed regularly. This helped children and their parents feel safe and have trust in the nursery.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

We identified significant strengths within the nursery, such as knowledgeable leadership, good staff support, effective meetings, positive role models and helpful external guidance from the Quality Officer. These strengths established a promising starting point for the service. Further targeted work was necessary, to build on these positives, tackle ongoing challenges, and meet the nursery's own high standards. This focused effort would ensure all children consistently benefit from high-quality care and learning, even when facing difficulties like staff changes.

The nursery's improvement plan appropriately targeted the recognised need to enhance staff skills and knowledge. Support from the leadership team had boosted staff confidence in this area, and their skills were developing. Continued investment in the team remained essential to ensure children achieved the best possible outcomes.

The services processes for monitoring of accidents and incidents required to be improved. Valuable opportunities for early intervention, identification of patterns and ongoing service improvement were overlooked, potentially increasing children's vulnerability. Improving these processes would help the service be dynamic and reflective leading to an environment that ensured the safety of all children.

The leaders were proactive at the time of inspection and made suggested adjustments to policies and quality assurance processes. This showed that the service was committed to ongoing improvement and engagement with the process.

We directed the service to the Care Inspectorate's notification guidance regarding their responsibility to identify and report relevant accidents and incidents (Scottish Government (2025) *Early learning and childcare services: Guidance on records you must keep and notifications you must make*. March). This will be discussed further within key question 4: How good is our staff team?

Parents actively participated in the nursery's daily operation through invitations to stay-and-play sessions, grandparents' days, and woodland visits. The nursery also encouraged parents to enrich the children's experiences by providing opportunities such as, bringing a fire engine, a tractor and a lamb. Parents spoke highly of the headteacher and lead practitioner, noting their willingness to go above and beyond and their openness to seeking help. One parent told us: "Mrs McKnight and Mrs Reid are an absolute credit to the nursery and school, we are very lucky to have them" whilst others told us that they felt that the leaders genuinely "loved and cared for the children". The active parental participation and the overwhelmingly positive feedback highlighted a thriving partnership built on trust and shared commitment to the children's well-being and development. This strong community support significantly enhanced the children's experiences.

How good is our staff team?

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 4.3 Staff deployment

Throughout the inspection visit staff effectively engaged with us. They reported that while coming together as a team had required an initial period of adjustment, they felt they had grown into a cohesive and supportive unit. Every staff member agreed they were effectively supported by the leadership team and confirmed that training opportunities provided valuable support for their development.

Significant staff changes within the setting resulted in most of the team being new to the nursery at the start of the academic year. These staff members clearly cared deeply for the children. However, due to their collective inexperience at that time, they were still developing the depth of knowledge and understanding required, to consistently ensure that all children experienced high-quality care and learning.

The service delivered a well-structured and supportive induction process, which included the national induction resource. This robust approach effectively laid the foundation that equipped new team members with the essential skills, knowledge and confidence to actively support their ongoing development needs. Utilising this resource to identify potential learning opportunities for staff was an important starting point, to support the development of a skilled workforce. One that is reflective in its practice and capable of meeting the holistic needs of the children in their care.

The nursery responded appropriately to initial parental concerns about children's wellbeing during staffing changes. Parents had initially described this 'rocky start,' noting that during this time some children appeared to experience temporary setbacks and found transitions more challenging. They also expressed that they felt the service had not sufficiently considered their children's wellbeing during the staffing changes. However, parents went on to describe that this period had settled, and they felt confident that staff knew the children well. One parent confirmed this positive change, stating, "The staff are wonderful and very knowledgeable. My child has a keyworker, but I love how all staff know my child so well, and I can approach any of them".

Such positive feedback showed the parents felt that the service had addressed and achieved significantly improved staff interactions, and its improvement plan detailed the next steps to continue the team's development.

Our observations highlighted the need to strengthen communication and collaboration among staff. We saw limited communication between staff members who remained focused on their designated areas. Enhanced support from the service would enable the sharing of valuable ideas and best practices, further enriching children's learning experiences. This indicated that with such improvements, children would more consistently benefit from the full potential of interactions and activities, which would encourage their curiosity and support their overall development.

There were effective processes in place to manage staff absence within the setting. This was evident throughout the inspection as the leaders succeeded in ensuring children's experiences were not negatively impacted by an absence. We were advised that absences were usually managed with the current staff, including leadership from within the school. This demonstrated their competence and commitment to maintaining a stable environment for the children.

We noted some inconsistencies in how staff followed key nursery procedures, particularly around first aid, which may have impacted children's safety. This indicated that the current staff deployment might not always support the consistent application of procedures throughout the setting.

To address this, the service needed to ensure every staff member could effectively understand and apply all procedures outlined in the setting's written processes. Additionally, we identified that the way leaders were deployed required strengthening. To help keep children safe, leaders needed to monitor practice to support the team in consistently managing any actual or potential problems. Leaders should also ensure these incidents were recorded and reported properly, in line with current legislation. This improved oversight would lead to children being safer, therefore we have made an area for improvement, to ensure consistency in managing how to keep children safe and secure (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, health and safety, the provider should ensure policies and procedures are adhered to. This should include, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring all staff are familiar with and adhere to policies and procedures in place, especially in relation to first aid protocols.
- Systems being in place which effectively audit data, to identify any adjustments required to ensure compliance with policies and procedures.
- Ensuring accidents and incidents are correctly identified, recorded and reported in accordance with the Care Inspectorate's document: 'Early learning and childcare services: Guidance on records you must keep and notifications you must make. (Scottish Government (2025) *Early learning and childcare services: Guidance on records you must keep and notifications you must make*. March)

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, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14).

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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