



Summarised inspection findings

Whitelees Primary School Nursery Class

North Lanarkshire Council

24 March 2026

HM Inspectors gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the ELC's work using three quality indicators from the Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors. This document provides our summarised findings.

Key contextual information

Whitelees Primary School Nursery Class, to the east of Cumbernauld, is part of Whitelees Primary School and provides early learning and childcare (ELC). It caters for children aged two to those not yet attending school. It is registered for 40 children at any one time of whom no more than four are aged two. There are currently 34 children on the roll. There are currently no children age two attending the nursery. The nursery is a term-time provision, and children attend between the hours of 8.50 a.m. and 2.50 p.m.

The headteacher of the school has overall responsibility for the nursery. She is supported by a full-time principal teacher and a full-time lead early learning practitioner (ELP). Further staffing includes four ELPs and two support workers.

The nursery consists of one large playroom with direct access to an outdoor area. There is a small room off the main playroom which is used for sensory experiences. Children make use of part of the playroom for lunches.

Curriculum	good
<p>This quality indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs, interests, rights and progress of children at the centre of curriculum design and implementation. <u>Curriculum</u> is defined as the totality of all that is planned for children from ELC, through school and beyond.</p> <p>It emphasises that children are entitled to a curriculum underpinned by the <u>principles of curriculum design</u> and enriched through meaningful learning experiences indoors, outdoors and within the community. It recognises the need for all children to experience opportunities to develop the interests, knowledge, skills, and attributes they will need to adapt, thrive and achieve in today's world. This quality indicator also recognises the importance of the curriculum supporting progress in children's learning as they enter the setting and at key points of transition.</p> <p>The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• curriculum rationale and design• continuity and progression in the curriculum• partnerships• skills for life and learning	

- The curriculum at Whitelees is built upon trusting, nurturing relationships where children's needs and interests are at the centre of staff's work. All staff have a growing understanding of the rights of the child and promote these daily in their ongoing interactions with children and families. Staff respond well to children's interests and encourage them to be resilient. They have recently carried out work to consider the daily experiences and resources available to children. As a result, resources on offer are now more predictable and children can revisit learning across a number of areas within the playroom. Most children confidently explore their nursery as they move between the indoors and outside play spaces. A few children would benefit, at times, from a greater level of support to re-engage, especially during times of transition.

- Staff are in the process of reviewing the curriculum rationale which is centred around their values of relationships, kindness, respect and aspiration. They refer to national practice guidance to inform and support their approach to developing the curriculum. As this work continues to progress, staff should consider the uniqueness of their setting. For example, they should make further use of the local community, in particular, the available experiences and potential partners within this.
- All children have access to a range of experiences which support them to receive their entitlement to a broad, holistic curriculum. In the outdoor space, most children access a range of loose parts and are supported well to develop their gross motor skills using the balance bikes. They investigate and explore for more sustained periods of time in this space. Children access their local community to visit the shop or go for a walk. Staff's use of digital technologies is at the early stages of being implemented within the setting. Staff should increase opportunities for children to learn about science and technologies.
- Supported by senior leaders, staff should ensure that the totality of the curriculum provides greater challenge and depth in learning, including indoors, outdoors and within the local community. Children are supported into the setting through a series of transition visits. Staff ensure an individualised approach to ensure the individual wellbeing needs of children are met effectively.
- Staff record children's learning experiences in photographic floorbooks and within children's 'special' folders. They use this information to track the curricular areas children have experienced and identify gaps across the curriculum. Staff should now ensure that they record more effectively how these experiences are developing a wider range of skills children are developing across the curriculum. This should include a focus on recording significant observations to ensure that children's skills and learning are clearly documented in a progressive way. Staff have very recently introduced a helpful tracking and monitoring tool which should support this work.
- Staff provide opportunities for families to share in their child's learning through planned stay and play sessions and events throughout the year. They provide termly home learning packs which support families to be involved in their child's learning journey in a fun way. Staff value children's learning and achievements at home and ensure there are opportunities to celebrate these through planned events. Staff use an online communication tool and newsletter to enhance further communication between home and nursery. The team should now reach out to the wider community to develop further links for lasting partnerships to enrich the curriculum.

This quality indicator focuses on how children benefit from access to high quality spaces and well-established routines that help them feel secure and ready to engage. It explores how children are supported to build positive relationships, regulate their emotions, and purposefully participate in a wide range of motivating learning experiences. It demonstrates the importance of staff having a high level of skill supported by strong pedagogical leadership. This includes a clear understanding of pedagogy, the concept of play, how children learn, children's rights and children's behaviour.

It places value on high quality relationships, consistent expectations, and skilled interactions that enable children to sustain engagement, follow routines, and build independence in their learning. This indicator highlights the importance of observing and interacting sensitively with children to plan and assess their learning. It recognises the value of involving children fully in planning their learning indoors, outdoors and within the local community. This quality indicator emphasises the importance of robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress to ensure practitioners know all children very well as learners.

The themes are:

- children's learning and engagement
- interactions to support learning
- planning and assessment
- tracking and monitoring

- All staff have very positive relationships with children and their families. They know children well and are nurturing in their responses to their needs. Staff have introduced a routine which is focused on reducing transitions throughout the day and increasing opportunities for positive, nurturing interactions. Most children benefit from this approach, gaining opportunities to make choices that positively shape their experiences, including through the 'loving lunches' initiative. Staff should continue to consider the purpose of gathering children during times of transition to ensure a well-planned, rich experience for children.
- Staff provide a warm and welcoming environment for children and families. They provide a range of resources and experiences both indoors and outdoors. Most children are motivated by the experiences and resources available to them, particularly in areas such as playdough, and block play. Most children interact with adults and their peers for more sustained periods of time in these areas. Staff use effective literacy interventions in small groups which supports literacy development well for almost all children. Recently, staff have focused on increasing opportunities for children to be independent. Although at the early stages, this work is beginning to have a positive impact, for example, when children get ready to go outdoors. Staff support children to become aware of their immediate community through visits to the local shop. They now need to continue the positive start made to provide a wider range of rich, high-quality experiences both indoors and within the local community.
- All staff interact with children in a respectful, and friendly manner. They support children to manage their emotions and play well together. Most interactions make effective use of questioning techniques and supportive commentary to deepen learning, for example, in the

block area. Building on this positive practice, senior leaders should consider ways to ensure consistency of the quality of interactions across the staff team.

- Staff plan effectively, both responsively and intentionally, using floorbooks and personal planning which includes the child's voice. They evaluate learning on a three-weekly cycle. Staff plan with families to consider the next steps in their child's learning. Their observations document effectively children's learning and development within 'special' folders and floorbooks. Staff now need to ensure that their observations consistently focus on children's developing skills and learning. They should ensure that all significant learning is recorded and built upon.
- Staff currently track children's progress in learning using personal learning plans and focused child observations. They are at the early stages of using a tracking tool. As rightly identified, staff should now embed this new tracking and monitoring system. Senior leaders should work with staff to moderate and challenge thinking amongst each other, to ensure all children are making the best possible progress in their learning.

This quality indicator highlights the importance of positive relationships and children's wellbeing. It recognises the importance of providing high quality, inclusive, and appropriate rights-based support.

These approaches result in improved outcomes for children's learning, wellbeing and participation. It takes full account of children who may require additional support to access and benefit fully from their entitlement to high quality ELC. This includes identifying and assessing their learning and wellbeing needs in a timely manner and providing personalised and targeted support.

This quality indicator recognises that strong, collaborative partnership working between those supporting children is essential. It highlights the importance of meaningful engagement with children and families to inform decisions about how children's needs should be met.

This quality indicator emphasises the important role senior leaders play in ensuring all staff have relevant and worthwhile professional learning to meet the diverse and sometimes complex needs of children.

The themes are:

- positive relationships and wellbeing
- universal support
- Identifying and assessing learning needs and targeted support
- inclusion and equality

- All staff have trusting and nurturing relationships with children and families which supports children to settle well within a safe and secure environment. The wellbeing of children, families and staff is a focus within the nursery. All staff model respectful, positive relationships for children, families and for their colleagues. Staff use opportunities throughout the day to check in with children and support them to talk about their emotions. They have recently introduced small group sessions named 'wee minds matter'. Most children engage well in these sessions and benefit from the quieter, more focused space to talk about their emotions. Staff have a sound understanding of the national wellbeing indicators. They discuss these with children in a developmentally appropriate way to support children's understanding of being healthy, safe and active. For example, children are developing their understanding well of keeping safe by risk assessing their outdoor space and being healthy as they exercise on the balance bikes.
- Senior leaders closely monitor attendance to ensure that any barriers to attendance are addressed. Staff have delivered successfully learning sessions to help families to understand the value of early learning and childcare.
- All children are valued and included. Staff know children well as individuals with their own personalities, interests and needs. They take account of children's individual learning needs as they plan experiences across the day. They make effective use of a range of spaces within the setting and wider school grounds to ensure individual needs are met, for example, through the use of the 'wee nest' and 'big nest'. Staff should now build on this work to ensure that children are fully involved in decisions which affect them in a developmentally appropriate way.

- Staff use a range of information to set individualised learning and development targets for all children. Supported by senior leaders, staff should ensure that targets are consistently of a high quality, are appropriately challenging and build on children’s prior learning. Staff should use the recently implemented progression pathways to support this work. This should lead to targets that support learning across the full curriculum.
- Staff identify children’s individual learning needs early through observation and ensure detailed support plans are in place. Staff value collaborative working and they recognise the positive impact this has on children’s learning. They work closely with families and value their contributions when planning for a diverse range of needs. When required, staff make use of the expertise of a range of professional partners to ensure children’s needs are well supported and met. Staff use a range of interventions and resources effectively to ensure children receive the support they require. They have a clear understanding of their statutory duties and keep up to date with national and local guidance. Staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and ensure the care and wellbeing needs of all children are met well.
- Staff know children and families well and promote an ethos of respect and kindness. They take positive steps to address any barriers to inclusion and understand the socio-economic context of the nursery. They make effective use of local charities to support families and promote initiatives such as ‘gift it forward’ to ensure all children are included. Staff promote and support diversity effectively through a range of resources and close partnership working with families.

Safeguarding

- The setting submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.