

St. Columba's Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

St. Columba's RC Primary School
Philip Avenue
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Telephone: 01506 653 822

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 November 2024

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003016154

About the service

St. Columbas is a day care of children service provided by West Lothian Council

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 20 November 2024 between 09:00 and 15:30 and Thursday 21 November between 08:00 and 13:30. The 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke and played with several children using the service and five of their parents/carers. We also took into account information from three completed questionnaires which were completed before the inspection;
- spoke with ten staff and management;
- observed practice and how children were supported with their routines, play and learning;
- reviewed documents;
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- The inclusive and welcoming ethos created by staff has established close relationships with families.
- Children benefit from daily opportunities for outdoor play.
- Staff interacted with children in kind, caring and respectful ways.
- Staff deployment should be reviewed, so all areas of the nursery are staffed to support and meet all children's needs.
- The staff team should continue to be developed as new members of staff share their skills, experience and knowledge.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from interactions that were kind, respectful and supportive. Staff were down at children's level which supported them to feel they mattered and were valued. As a result, we saw that almost all children were happy, confident and able to enjoy their nursery experience.

Effective communication with families meant partnership working with parents was well established. Regular meetings, daily verbal updates and time with keyworkers enabled information about children's progress and development to be shared. This meant personal plans contained relevant, up to date information. As a result, parents felt fully involved in decisions made about their child's care. Staff talked knowledgeably about the needs of children as areas of support had been agreed. This meant children experienced a consistent approach to their care. Parents shared "Staff are very accommodating and share information every day." And "I am regularly informed about what would be the goals for my child to achieve, what goals have been achieved and in what way."

Meal and snack times were relaxed and sociable for children. We saw children had some opportunities to develop their self help skills. For example, they could serve themselves, pour drinks and tidy away their dishes when finished. Staff should consider how they can further develop children's involvement in the snack and mealtimes routines. For example, preparing food and settling the tables. These opportunities will enable children to build on their skills and increase independence.

We confirmed that as best practice was followed, children's medication was stored and administered safely. We asked staff to check how long creams could be used once opened as this may be different to the expiry date.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefitted from a well organised environment where a range of activities supported their development and interests. This enabled them to lead their play both indoors and outdoors. Open ended resources helped children use their imagination, curiosity and investigation. As they played, children said "I'm making dinner. It's cereal." And "I like to play with my friends. I like to play with blocks and drawing." Parents shared that children played "Both indoor and outdoors, walks to the park and to the shops (to buy ingredients for baking, art and crafts, building, water play, reading, talking about emotions, playing with dolls and in a house corner, singing songs and dancing, lots of opportunities for movement (in a gym hall)."

There was a range of skills when staff interacted with children. Some staff were responsive to children's interests and asked them about their play. For example, playing music children wanted so they could dance. Opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy were supported in play as children matched number at the dough table and with electronic games. To help children make progress in their learning, staff should continue to develop the use of effective questions. This will extend children's thinking and extend their learning.

At times throughout the day there were missed opportunities to promote children's learning through play. Once the service was busy, following routines and carrying out some tasks impacted on staff availability to support learning effectively. Staff should consider when they undertake tasks so the impact on children's learning is minimised.

Children's interests and learning was captured in floor books. This approach enabled children to be involved in and lead their learning. They talked about their interest, what they knew and what they wanted to learn. Experiences for children were evaluated and demonstrated the progress they were making. Parents shared "I am regularly informed about what would be the goals for my child to achieve, what goals have been achieved and in what way."

Observations in online journals shared children's development with parents. We noted there was a difference in the way some information was recorded. Some entries were detailed and demonstrated staff understanding of the child's development and progress they were making. In some instances, only the activity was recorded with no information about children's learning. To promote consistency, this was an area that staff were going to be supported with. As they develop their skills to record meaningful observations, they will be effectively used to record children's learning, development and next steps. This would ensure children's continued progress.

Children had daily opportunities to play in the natural environment. Direct access to a spacious outdoor area supported free flow play for children. The layout and spaces offered children stimulating and interesting environments outdoors. They could play on wheeled toys, use their imagination in the mud kitchen or learn about nature and seasons. When asked what children had done outside one child said 'Sliding down the hill on my bum. It was super fun.'

Staff talked how the recent cold weather impacted on some children's routines as they like to be outside. They should plan for this so children can access activities they like indoors.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Staff had created a safe, welcoming and well organised environment which was inviting and supported children's learning and development. Cosy areas were available which ensured they could also have quiet time to rest if they wanted to. Some children benefitted from the sensory area in the cloakroom.

Resources and toys were arranged so that children could choose what they wanted to do. The layout meant children had space to develop their games and play as they could move resources around.

Children benefitted from direct access to enclosed, outdoor area for play. Open ended resources offered children a variety of play experiences. Playing in the natural environment, promoted their well-being as they benefitted from fresh air and exercise. Parents shared that children liked "Riding bikes, running and discovering the space outdoor and going on the walks."

We were satisfied that the environment was well ventilated, hand washing promoted and regular cleaning took place. These measures were effective at minimising the spread of infection. Risk assessments and daily

checks were used well to achieve and maintain a safe environment. To further improve hand washing, we asked the service to consider how this could be available outdoors for children.

Staff were security conscious as they accounted for children throughout the day. They had used SIMOA (Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe and Act) to help children learn about keeping safe. Safety measures included a secure door entry system and high handles on playroom doors. These kept children safe as staff knew who was in the building and prevented children from leaving. We were satisfied that children's information was safely stored.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The use of national and local guidance as well as best practice documents supported staff to reflect on their practice. Staff contributed to change as they undertook leadership roles within the setting. They were developing literacy, numeracy and the outdoor area to improve outcomes for children. For example, they were developing numeracy skills due to a focus on number recognition.

Team work within the setting meant staff contributed to the development of the service. Effective use of team meetings meant the time spent together was meaningful. Staff felt valued as their suggestions were listened to and resulted in a shared vision to make improvements in the service. Staff shared the initiatives they had introduced to improve outcomes for children. For example, the introduction of the colour monster had supported children's emotional well-being.

Regular monitoring, reviews and audits meant that the work of the service was effectively monitored. This meant staff were supported in their role as they were mentored and given guidance about their practice. For example, getting feedback to ensure all necessary information was recorded in personal plans. This work influenced consistent staff approaches to record keeping.

Staff recognised the importance of using data to measure improvements. We saw how this was used, for example, to show how children's vocabulary had increased after using 'box clever'. In addition, the review of accidents enabled staff to identify any particular theme and make an informed decision about any action needed to minimise risk.

Opportunities were in place that supported parents' and children's views to be gathered. Parents said "We are asked to complete surveys and questionnaires." And "Regular forms to write down anything we like/dislike about the service." Parents and carers confirmed they were routinely involved in the work of the service and their children's care. This meant they felt valued and knew their opinions mattered. One parent "Feels she works well with staff and can spend time in the setting to support their child." Another said "My feedback is always asked for and valued along the way - I very much feel part of the team at St Columba's."

Children's voice was captured in floor books where they shared with staff what they wanted to learn about. They knew their views mattered as staff provided activities to support their interests and extend learning. As a result children felt valued as they were involved in planning their experiences.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Changes to the staff team have been well managed. As a result staff had settled in quickly and felt welcomed. They were developing as a staff team as they shared skills, knowledge and experience which would support positive outcomes for children and families. This would help provide a sound basis to develop positive working relationships. Parents shared "EYO is very friendly, warm and nurturing. Some staff at pick up are very friendly and give you lots of information. I do not know all staff well". And "They (staff) are always super friendly."

Children benefitted from a range of staff skills and experience within the team. Staff were committed to professional development and used training and best practice guidance to keep up to date. Children were supported with dignity and respect because all staff across the setting used a rights based approach. We saw that interactions were warm, kind and compassionate and children were listened to.

Staff were deployed indoors and outdoors to support children. We noted, at times, when children were being supported with their routines, there was not enough staff left in the area. At these times, staff should communicate with each other and reorganise themselves to maintain the skill mix across the team. Children will be appropriately supervised and supported by staff throughout the day.

Staff should consider if some parts of the daily routine could be changed to help staff deployment. For example, we suggested having children's outdoor clothing organised outside. Children would be helped by staff assigned to outdoors if needed. This would reduce the transition for children as they would not need staff support to go into the cloakroom area.

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

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