

Westfield Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 February 2025

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015422

About the service

Westfield Primary School Nursery is a Daycare of Children service delivered by North Lanarkshire council. The nursery is situated in a residential area of Westfield in Cumbernauld, which is serviced by a regular bus route and is close to local shops and amenities.

The nursery is part of Westfield Primary School. Children have access to a large, bright playroom and an enclosed garden. They also make use of the school gym hall.

The service is registered to care for up to 40 children aged from 3 to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of inspection 32 children were registered with the service and 27 were in attendance.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 February between 09:15 and 16:30, and 27 February between 09:15 and 13:45. 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
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed digital questionnaires from seven families
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with one visiting professional.

Key messages

Kind and warm interactions helped children to feel safe and secure.

Staff were responsive to the needs of the children.

The leadership team were strong and had a clear plan for improvement.

The staff team were eager to engage in the improvement process.

The children would benefit from an improved lunch time routine, which would allow them to develop independence and choice.

The environment would benefit from processes being in place to ensure all areas are well maintained.

Families were actively involved in the service.

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?	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?

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 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Caring and kind staff interactions, including praise and support, were evident. Staff recognised and responded to a particularly quiet child by inviting them to play with others. This meant the child felt included in the play experiences, supporting them to develop social skills by interacting with others. We discussed where the service could further enhance their approach to consistently facilitate and challenge children's learning.

Personal plans were in place for all children and provided information that created a foundation for individual learning. We suggested that these could be further developed to demonstrate how to extend learning and align next steps with children's interests and development. Parents told us that they were involved in the development of the children's plans with one saying: "Personal support plan is always updated and I link with my child's key worker to help choose targets that are suitable for their development".

Children with additional support needs benefited from partnership working across the local authority, which was evidenced within their plans. One visiting professional told us that the service "demonstrated excellent communication between professionals". By ensuring children were well-supported, the service promoted positive outcomes, which included increased confidence, improved social skills and overall wellbeing.

Snack was a positive experience for children, who were empowered to freely access the area over the course of the afternoon, with minimal support required from staff. They were able to choose when, what and where they ate. In contrast, lunch offered less opportunity for children to have control of their experiences or to develop independence skills through self-serving. The service recognised this and had taken positive steps to improve children's lunchtime experiences. This included working closely with the quality team from the local authority to identify support required to enhance children's experiences. We were confident that positive changes were being discussed, such as introducing two sittings. These changes will support children to develop social relationships and and empower them to have their voices heard.

Medication was administered safely with appropriate systems in place. This contributed to children's safety and wellbeing, ensuring their health needs were met appropriately.

All staff had completed Child Protection training and annual refresher sessions were planned. Child protection policies and procedures were in place and staff demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities in the protection process. This helped to ensure children were safe and protected from harm.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children benefited from a relaxed setting, which supported periods of uninterrupted play. They chose their own activities and led their own play with the resources available. One child told us "I love drawing" whilst

another said "We are doing story time". Further consideration should be given to ensuring the children have access to sufficient resources to support, challenge and extend their play. This includes further development of numeracy and literacy learning opportunities, promoting children's ability to drive their own learning and development, allowing them to learn at their own pace.

We observed children reading stories to each other and lots of imaginative play within the home corner. This showed that children were happy and relaxed in the setting, which allowed them to engage in meaningful play experiences.

Children were noted to be having fun with the environment and each other. Staff provided positive interactions when invited to play by the children. The opportunity to extend children's learning through these interactions was not fully realised. This suggested that staff needed a stronger understanding of their role in supporting learning during uninterrupted play and in aligning learning opportunities with children's interests.

We found that the indoor resources offered limited opportunities for children to extend their own play and learning, this was also raised by parents. For instance, the provision of only a small amount of sand and Play-Doh restricted children's ability to engage in sustained imaginative or exploratory play, limiting opportunities for deeper learning and skill development. Staff informed us that more resources were available, yet the absence of these during the inspection visit suggested potential challenges in consistent access and availability. Developing staff skills in effectively providing and facilitating resources use is crucial. This would empower staff to confidently offer a richer and more stimulating environment, enabling children using the service to feel happy, relaxed and confident as they explore and learn through play. Children would benefit from access to a greater variety and quantity of open-ended materials which are readily accessible. This would also be enhanced by supporting staff to further develop skills in observing children's play and introducing resources or ideas that build upon their interests and extend their learning in the moment.

The service had implemented a new approach to planning children's learning experiences and the play environment. This demonstrated a proactive response to identified developmental needs. Recognising that the new planning approach required refinement, the staff team's identification of areas for improvement highlighted a commitment to self-evaluation and professional growth. Leaders ensured staff received strong support throughout this transition. Their clear improvement plan and consistent support established a structured framework for implementing the new system. This leadership strategy demonstrated a well-organised and effective approach to addressing service needs.

For much of the day, the children freely accessed the outdoor play area. They were supported to wear suitable clothing, which promoted their independence and problem-solving skills. Being outdoors allowed for physical activity and encouraged environmental exploration, positively impacting on their self-confidence and engagement.

Caring and kind staff interactions, including praise and support, were evident. We observed where the service could further enhance their approach to consistently facilitate and challenge children's learning. Discussions with the service highlighted the benefit of implementing targeted training to develop a shared understanding of providing effective and appropriate support during play. This would ensure a cohesive approach and enhance children's play experiences.

Come and Play sessions had been a success and feedback we received from parents confirmed this. More sessions were planned in the following weeks. These provided opportunities for parents to spend time in the nursery environment with their children, which strengthened the relationship between home and

nursery. To further encourage parental involvement, the service was exploring ways to help families become more involved and feel included in the nursery.

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 - Children experience high quality facilities

The service was provided from a single playroom. The large windows provided significant natural light, which is generally beneficial for mood, wellbeing, and can reduce the need for artificial lighting, potentially saving energy. Children with sensory sensitivities or specific learning needs may be particularly vulnerable to overstimulation from bright light. This could negatively affect their ability to engage in activities, feel comfortable and learn effectively. The service agreed to monitor this.

The outdoor area provided opportunities for children to engage in physical play and encouraged curious play with the loose parts available. Children were observed having fun in the mud and using mathematical language such as "full, over and half" to describe what they were seeing as the muddy waters went into their boots. This clearly demonstrated that learning is happening through play. We noted that staff had taken appropriate action to minimise the risks to children by closing off garden structures, which had been assessed as unsafe. One was to be removed and one was due to be refurbished by a parent once the weather was better.

The leadership team was proactively reviewing their risk management approaches. They recognised the importance of having stronger systems to ensure children could play and explore safely. We agreed there was a need for enhanced systems to be in place which supported meaningful risk management approaches.

The service provided clear play spaces, such as messy play, physical play and a home corner, demonstrating their understanding of the importance of space for children to be with each other in large or small groups. This supported the development of positive relationships. The environment would benefit from developing more quiet, cosy areas for the children to self-regulate and have time away from the busyness of the playroom. Children demonstrated the need for this by adapting an arched area with a blanket to create a quiet space. The service should consider how to extend these areas and provide spaces, inside and out, where children can take time to learn how to self-soothe and regulate their emotions, have quiet time and relax. We were assured that this was already being reviewed through the service's improvement journey.

Infection prevention and control procedures could be improved. While children were encouraged to wash their hands before lunch, this routine was not supervised and children were observed having fun in the bathroom with their peers, with limited effective handwashing being carried out. The environment would benefit from resources being cleaned regularly to ensure children experience play spaces which are well looked after with clean, tidy, well-maintained furnishings and equipment. Positive action had been taken when this was highlighted, however a more robust cleaning routine needs to take place going forward.

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.

The service benefited from a strong leadership team who worked well together and had a clear vision for improvement. Leaders were passionate and knowledgeable, and recognised where the strengths and development needs lay within the staff team. The service had undergone some significant changes since the last inspection, which had been challenging for the existing staff team. They were supported sensitively by the leadership team to adjust to and implement change. This helps to develop a strong staff team who are likely to develop a greater capacity to adapt to future challenges.

Staff told us that they felt communication could be improved within the service, with some feeling that information can be missed due to working patterns. This led to some staff not having up to date information regarding changes within the setting. A communication book had been developed, however staff felt this need to be enhanced. Leaders agreed to review their processes to ensure all staff are included.

The leadership team effectively managed change by anticipating challenges, providing support, monitoring practice and focusing on the impact on children. This could be further developed by incorporating regular wellbeing-focused reviews of staff practice. This would strengthen their approach even further, creating a more resilient staff team.

Some policies had been reviewed as part of the ongoing development of the service. We identified some that required to be updated with current information in line with best practice. This will ensure that children experience support from people who have the necessary information and resources to keep them safe.

Staff, children and families were all listened to and had a voice in the development of the service, which demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity and participation. For example, staff had requested a change to the planning format, parents had requested to be more involved in the setting and children's voices were heard through the observations of them at play. Measures had been taken by the service to respond to the identified needs. All of this together ensured a positive ethos within the setting that everybody mattered. This should continue to be developed in order to maintain relationships and ensure positive outcomes for the children.

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.

The staff team were established professionals who supported each other and engaged well with us during our visit. Their kindness, care and affection were apparent in their interactions. While they were enthusiastic about their roles and spoke positively about their work, staff also indicated that communication within the service could be improved, a point they felt was relevant due to working patterns. They generally felt supported by leaders.

Strong, positive relationships had been formed between nursery staff and parents who advised that they were happy with the care and support their children received. This was also observed at the end of the day

as staff communicated how the children's day had been. One parent told us: "Westfield nursery has been nothing short of what I expected, fantastic! I feel the staff really care about and for my child".

Staff effectively supported and supervised children throughout the day. They ensured children were safe and their needs were met. The staff communicated well with each other as they moved around the playroom in response to children's needs, ensuring care and support was consistent and stable.

The staff team were committed to self improvement and identified specific training for themselves across the year. This took the form of in-house and external training, as well as professional reading. More recently, staffing levels impacted on their ability to access and complete training opportunities. Consideration should be given to how to manage staffing levels effectively to provide staff with the opportunity to enhance their practice, ensuring positive outcomes for children.

Staff focused on tasks at certain times, such as the lunch routine. This meant fewer spontaneous and meaningful interactions between staff and children during mealtimes, making conversation, relationship building and addressing individual needs or interests more difficult. This impacted the experiences for children who benefit from role models and staff interaction. A better understanding of their role will help staff ensure children have an unhurried and relaxed mealtime.

Staff benefited from professional review meetings with leaders. As recognised by the leadership team, more time was needed for this process to evidence staff strengths, achievements and leadership skills. This will enable staff to identify personal interests and progression opportunities, and support them to feel included and empowered as the service changes and develops.

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?	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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