

Kirk O'Shotts Primary School Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

School Road
Salsburgh
Shotts
ML7 4NS

Telephone: 01698274910

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 May 2025

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2011289456

About the service

Kirk O'Shotts Primary School Nursery Class is a day care of children service provided by North Lanarkshire Council. It is part of the Kirk O'Shotts Primary School community.

The service is located in Shotts, North Lanarkshire. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of 32 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. During the inspection, 14 children attended on day one and 17 on day two.

The children were cared for within a large, bright playroom and an enclosed outdoor space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 and 14 May 2025 between 08:30 and 15:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was present during the inspection as part of our quality assurance processes. 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 some children using the service
- gathered feedback from nine family members of children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed staff practice and children's experiences
- 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 mostly settled and had opportunities to lead their play.
- Children freely accessed outdoor play throughout the day.
- The head teacher was committed to the ongoing development of the service.
- The service should continue to embed newly developed personal plans to ensure they meet children's individual needs.
- Robust risk assessments were required for the outdoor play area.
- Children benefited from free flow access to the enclosed garden area.
- The service had suffered significant staffing issues which, at times, impacted on the continuity of children's care.

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

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|--|--------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | 3 - Adequate |
| How good is our setting? | 4 - Good |
| How good is our leadership? | 3 - Adequate |
| How good is our staff team? | 3 - Adequate |

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 this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Staff demonstrated kindness, nurture and compassion in their interactions with children. They welcomed children warmly into the service and offered appropriate cuddles when needed. As a result, most children were happy and settled. There were times when staff were more focussed on tasks and, as a result, less responsive to children's needs. This reduced the quality of nurturing interactions. We discussed this with the head teacher who agreed to monitor this.

Staff mostly knew the children and how to support them. They used 'at a glance information' to learn about children's specific needs. There was information contained within children's personal plans about their likes, dislikes and individual support needs to help staff meet their needs. However, the quality of personal plans was inconsistent. Some plans lacked detailed information about how children should be supported, and others had not been reviewed and updated. This meant that staff did not always have access to the most recent information to support children's needs. We asked that personal plans were reviewed to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time (see area for improvement 1).

All staff carried visual prompts to help children communicate their needs and choices but these were not used consistently by staff. We asked staff to apply these consistently and we suggested the development of further resources to support children's communication. This would support children to have their needs met by staff, supporting their overall wellbeing.

During lunch, some children ate in the playroom and some went to the school dining area. Staff were knowledgeable about children's dietary requirements and allergies. This supported children's wellbeing. Children had some opportunities to develop independence through self-serving snacks which involved using tongs and pouring drinks.

Staff aimed to provide a sociable lunch experience and they mostly sat with children to promote this. Due to reduced staffing levels, staff were frequently called away from their tables to attend to other tasks or children. This reduced supervision and meant staff were not always alert to what was happening with children. In the lunch hall, the level of noise was high at times. As a result, children did not always encounter a relaxed lunchtime experience (see area for improvement 2).

When children required support with their personal care, this was dealt with sensitively. Staff were warm and friendly in their interactions which supported a nurturing experience.

Overall, staff were knowledgeable about child protection procedures. This meant they were well placed to address any concerns should they arise, which helped keep children safe. Whilst the service had a generic missing child policy in place, it had not been personalised to reflect the service and its environment. We asked that this be reviewed so that staff had access to clear guidance during such an event.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The availability of resources supported child-led play and staff appropriately responded to children's ideas. For example, when one child asked to bath the dolls, the staff provided the materials to accommodate this. As a result, children were having fun.

Children benefited from some planned and spontaneous play experiences. They had some opportunities to develop their language through individual conversations, and through group activities such as singing songs and listening to stories. Some resources were available to help children develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, some books were displayed that children could access independently. Measuring equipment such as rulers, syringes and measuring jugs were available to support numeracy. Children used mathematical language such as 'half full' whilst engaged in water play. We suggested how experiences and resources could have been improved to ensure that children make progress in their learning.

Children played imaginatively, for example caring for dolls and playing on a climbing frame. They were having fun as they pretended to drive a lorry and telling us, "I'm going on holiday" and "I'm going to Dundee". Staff supervised and offered materials to support children's imaginative play. Children also enjoyed exploring sand and water, mixing them together and exploring the changes. There were missed opportunities to extend children's learning through conversations and questioning. This meant that some children were not always sufficiently challenged.

Staff had identified 'in the moment planning' as an area for development within their improvement plan. This is where staff observe children, assess their abilities and plan activities and experiences that would extend children's learning. This was not yet fully embedded to clearly identify how children's learning goals would be supported. Staff should continue to develop this approach to ensure that children's individual learning needs are planned for. This would help children make good progress.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children receive care and support that meets their needs, the service should develop children's personal plans. This should include, but not be limited to, ensuring that every child has a personal plan in place within 28 days of starting at the service. Plans should be developed with parents or carers, and they should contain support strategies that identify how their needs will be met. Plans should be made accessible to staff working in the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.'(HSCS 1.15)

2. To support children's wellbeing, the provider should ensure children's mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried. This should include, but not be limited to, ensuring consistent staff deployment during children's lunch times.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

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 setting was comfortable and inviting, with natural lighting and good ventilation. Children had clearly identified spaces to place their belongings, and staff had made space for a family photo wall which parents had been asked to develop by providing photographs. This helped create a welcoming environment and gave children the message that they matter.

The playroom was furnished with high quality furniture and spaces had been carefully planned to reflect children's interests. There was a good amount of toys and resources to support children's learning. Children enjoyed playing with dolls, drawing pictures and making things with playdough. There were plenty of resources to choose from and, as a result, most children were engaged in play throughout the day.

Children could freely move between indoor and outdoor spaces. The enclosed outdoor space allowed children to explore and develop their problem solving skills. They had access to a wide range of resources and materials to choose from such as bikes, sand, water and books. Open ended resources were available throughout the outdoor space, allowing children to develop their imaginative play and curiosity. Children were unable to access the wider green space within the school grounds due to storm damage. We agreed with staff that, once repaired, children would benefit from accessing this area to engage in further outdoor learning experiences such as planting and growing.

Garden checklists were completed by staff which helped them to identify existing hazards. Whilst some risk assessments were in place, staff were not using them to consider potential risks and put measures in place to reduce risks. For example, we highlighted items that were close to, or attached to the fence. These items could potentially be used to aid children climbing over and exiting the playground. We asked that staff develop risk assessments to ensure measures are applied consistently to reduce risks. This would help keep children safe.

Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times throughout the day, such as before lunch. We asked that this be developed further by ensuring that staff and children wash their hands at other key times during the day, such as when returning from outdoor play. Children's handwashing should be supervised to ensure it is carried out effectively. This will help reduce the risk of infection.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Staffing challenges within the service meant that the staff team had been inconsistent for a period of time. This had impacted on staff's ability to provide continuity of care, provide sufficient challenge in learning, develop as a team and implement change. As a result, progress towards positive improvements within the service was compromised. The headteacher was aware of the challenges within the nursery and spent extended periods of time in the playroom to support children, families and staff. This provided some level of

consistency for children to support their wellbeing.

The service's improvement plan had identified areas for development, including creating nurturing environment and increased parental involvement. Environmental audits had been completed and some improvements had been made as a result. For example, play spaces had been developed to ensure children could make choices about where they wanted to play based on their interests. This supported children to engage in meaningful play experiences.

Regular meetings between staff and the head teacher provided opportunities to reflect on practice and plan improvements. Records of these meetings helped track progress and assess impact. However, the inclusion of clear next steps would ensure that progress could continue during changes within the staff team. This would support continued improvements within the service.

Services are required to notify the Care Inspectorate of certain events, including planned refurbishments. The provider had made changes in the building which reduced the amount of toilets that children had access to. Whilst the provider told us that they had reduced the number of children attending the service, their conditions of registration had not been changed to reflect this. We asked that the provider ensure children had access to a sufficient amount of toilets to meet their needs, or they submit a variation to the Care Inspectorate to amend the conditions of their registration. This would help meet children's personal care needs (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's safety and wellbeing, the service should ensure that children have access to enough toilets to meet their personal care needs. The minimum number of toilets available for children aged two years and over, is one toilet per 10 children or part thereof, not fewer than four, as detailed in Care Inspectorate guidance 'Space to Grow and Thrive'.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11)

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment

The skills of the staff team varied throughout the day. Experienced staff had been employed temporarily to manage significant absences. The head teacher provided support to the staff and a familiar face for the children. The staff team communicated well throughout the day. This provided the children with security and helped them to feel safe in the setting.

The nursery effectively welcomed new staff with a clear plan and, when possible, provided experienced mentors. This helped new team members settle in and feel more confident. However, ongoing staffing

challenges meant some staff didn't always receive essential basic training, such as infection control. This left them less prepared, potentially leading to inconsistencies in the care children received.

Parents told us that whilst the changes in the team had been challenging, the staff were all "very nice and approachable". This suggests that the individual quality of interactions helped children cope with the changes, which supported them to feel safe and cared for. To further support the continuity of care, the head teacher ensured that, as far as possible, consistent staff were used to cover absences. This builds emotional resilience during times of change.

Transitions were supported sensitively for new children to the setting and for those moving on to primary school. To support this transition, children were familiar with the school building throughout their time in nursery by accessing areas such as the gym hall and lunch hall.

The minimum adult to child ratio was met, however, as the children were unfamiliar with most of the adults, it was challenging for staff to always meet their needs. Meaning children's wishes and choices could have been more consistently supported. For example, children were finding it hard to share the same space at the play dough area. They would have benefited from high quality interactions to support their emotional wellbeing. This may lead to children feeling overlooked, impacting their overall happiness and sense of belonging.

At the end of the day, staff made time to speak to parents to pass on any relevant information from the day. This meant children benefited from a connection between home and nursery, further supporting them to feel a sense of security with the staff.

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

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| How good is our care, play and learning? | 3 - Adequate |
| 1.1 Nurturing care and support | 3 - Adequate |
| 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? | 3 - Adequate |
| 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well | 3 - Adequate |
| How good is our staff team? | 3 - Adequate |
| 4.3 Staff deployment | 3 - Adequate |

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