

Summarised inspection findings

Westpark Nursery School and Out of School Care

South Lanarkshire Council

1 November 2022

Key contextual information

Westpark Nursery and Out of School Care is a private provider who works in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council to provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC). The nursery is registered for 48 children at any one time and caters for babies to children not yet attending school. The nursery also provides funded places for children aged two years who are eligible for 1140 hours of ELC. There are currently 62 children on the nursery roll. The nursery is registered for 10 children to attend the out of school care service, which operates within the same building. This service operates before and after school hours and during school holidays.

The team is experienced with many practitioners having worked in the nursery for several or more years. All practitioners are qualified with some having gained, or are working towards, further qualifications. The nursery has not been significantly impacted by COVID-19 or the changes as a result of the implementation of 1140 hours of funded ELC. The manager and practitioners have managed any challenges presented by the pandemic or expansion well. A flexible approach to children's placements is provided which allows effective use of funding to suit the needs of families.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- There is a collective commitment to deliver high-quality practice for children and families. The staff team reviewed the vision, values and aims in August 2021 to ensure they remained relevant post pandemic. The vision, values and aims are shared with parents during meetings and in the nursery handbook. The manager worked with families to support approaches to the delivery of 1140 hours of funded ELC. Working in partnership has resulted in a very flexible approach which families appreciate.
- Practitioners and families respect and trust the manager. They welcome her flexible and caring approach to leadership. She is highly visible, supporting practitioners and children, in the day-to-day running of the nursery. Practitioners appreciate the support offered to them both personally and professionally, for example, encouraging study towards additional qualifications.
- Practitioners are reflective in their practice. The manager has identified that a more outward looking approach will support this further. This could support practitioners to develop further their practice to reflect current guidance and to foster innovation and creativity. Practitioners welcome and take up opportunities for professional learning. To ensure continuous improvement, the manager and practitioners should ensure there is a clear focus on developing a shared pedagogy. In doing so, they should continue to take account of national guidance alongside other important statutory aspects.
- The manager encourages and supports distributed leadership across the nursery including the creation of a new management post. This is at the early stages of development and is already

providing practitioners with opportunities to lead and take forward improvements. Practitioners are keen to take their designated responsibilities forward and develop and apply new skills. Working in this way is sharing responsibility and increasing capacity for improvement and change. It will be important that everyone is involved in the evaluation of the impact of improvements made.

- The manager and practitioners use self-evaluation well to identify relevant, measurable targets to improve outcomes for children and families. The current improvement plan contains priorities that are well judged. These will support the implementation of improvement and change that is appropriate to the development needs of the setting. The focus on how practitioners further support children to make progress in their learning will be key to improving the work of the nursery.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Babies benefit from a homely experience with practitioners who nurture and care for them sensitively. Toddlers are settled and developing their confidence to make choices in their play. Across the setting, warm, respectful and nurturing relationships between practitioners and children and between children and their peers are a strong feature. The inclusive ethos ensures that children feel valued, safe and secure. This is supporting almost all children to be confident and motivated in their play. As a result, most children concentrate well on their chosen activities or when engaged in structured activities led by practitioners. The introduction of free access to the outdoors and the introduction of open-ended resources has improved the quality of learning outdoors. Practitioners recognise the difference open-ended resources make to children's engagement in their learning. As planned, they should continue to increase the use of open-ended resources and natural materials in all areas. This will support the further development of children's creativity, curiosity and inquiry skills.
- Practitioners know children and their stage of development well. They use this information to support children to achieve. All team members readily engage in conversation with children to encourage them to talk about their experiences and share their ideas. The use of floor books help practitioners take forward children's individual interests and build on prior learning. This helps enable children to make important decisions about what they want to learn and lead their own learning.
- Practitioners make frequent observations of children's learning and can talk confidently about their progress over time. The manager and practitioners recognise that documentation of children's learning could provide a more coherent and individualised story of learning over time. This should further involve children and families to promote a shared ownership of the documentation. This is a key priority for development in the current improvement plan and practitioners are already working to develop this.
- Practitioners track children's progress using helpful tools provided by the local authority. This provides a useful overview of children's progress. Practitioners are continuing to develop the use of this important evidence of children's progress. This will help identify and build on children's progress across the key aspects of early learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners provide a curriculum that is play based and increasingly responsive to children's interests. Planning continues to develop in line with national guidance and reflects key areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners should develop a rationale to underpin the curriculum framework delivered in the setting. This should build on the already developed vision. It should also reflect the strong focus on nurture and positive relationships that are key positive features of the nursery. Practitioners should use national practice guidance, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me*, as a key element in the development of a rationale for the curriculum. The manager has identified that practitioners would benefit from input from the local authority to support an outward looking approach that promotes curriculum innovation.
- Practitioners plan transitions into and within the nursery well. They are sensitive to the needs of individual children and their families as they begin nursery or move playroom. Practitioners moving playrooms with children have supported recent transitions. Families appreciate the continuity of care beyond nursery offered by the out of school care service.
- During the pandemic practitioners developed and applied their digital skills, for example high quality recordings of important nursery events to share with families. Children make use of computers and other digital technologies. Practitioners are keen to continue to develop their skills and use them to support children's learning in more creative ways.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Children benefit from a range of partnerships which are being re-established post pandemic. Intergenerational links provide children with purposeful opportunities to be part of their local community.
- Parents are now able to physically access the setting following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Practitioners and families welcome this and the opportunities that it brings. These include 'stay and play' sessions planned for the youngest children. Parents value the daily and detailed communication and more formal parents evenings. They are very appreciative that communication continued throughout the pandemic, despite challenging circumstances. Parents evenings provide opportunities to share documentation of children's learning and achievements. A few parents would like consideration of more regular, formal methods of sharing information about care and learning. The manager has identified this as an improvement priority and has increased the number of planned parent meetings. Consideration could also be made to the use of a mobile application or social media. The manager has developed and delivered information sessions, for example, information about funding for ELC places and is keen to extend this approach.

2.1 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Relationships are a key strength of the setting and practitioners deliver high standards of care. The promotion of the wellbeing of children and their families underpins the work of the nursery, resulting in a culture of trust and respect. Practitioners' interactions with children, families and each other are consistently nurturing, responsive and caring. This helps children to settle into nursery and feel safe and secure. There is a strong sense of community with children and practitioners proud to be 'West Parkies'. The connections families have with the nursery are often long lasting and it is well established in the local community. This adds to the sense of wellbeing for children and families.
- Practitioners provide positive role models to young children. Children demonstrate strong interpersonal skills. Interactions between nursery children and children attending out of school care also support a sense of belonging and continuity of relationships. Practitioners ensure routines are responsive to the differing needs of children across the day. Children are involved in routines such as snack and lunchtimes. Practitioners should review menus to ensure children receive meals and snacks in line with nutritional guidance.
- Children are developing their awareness of the national wellbeing indicators, in particular being safe, healthy responsible and nurturing. Puppets, such as Safe Sully promote the indicators in a meaningful way. For example reinforcing the need to wear a helmet when using wheeled toys. The nursery pet snails also provide a relevant context to understand the importance of wellbeing. Practitioners could support children further to develop an understanding of the full range of indicators through relevant contexts. Children should continue to be more fully involved in making decisions that affect them.
- Practitioners are fully aware of, and comply with, statutory requirements in relation to ELC. They are clear about their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Each child has a personal plan, which outlines care and health needs and helps practitioners to identify strategies to support individual needs. Senior leaders have undertaken professional learning to ensure their understanding of staged intervention processes to support children who may have barriers to their learning. This knowledge is helping ensure appropriate support and guidance is sought to meet any additional needs identified. They work effectively with other professionals and support agencies to help children make the best possible progress.
- The nursery has an inclusive ethos with practitioners working to ensure that all children make the best possible progress. Practitioners value everyone as an individual. Everyone is treated with respect within the nursery community. Practitioners support children to access all areas of learning. Children are developing an awareness of diversity through exploring a range of events across the year. Practitioners could develop this further to be more responsive to the nursery context and to reflect the extensive knowledge practitioners have of families.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Across the setting, there is a strong focus on the health and wellbeing of children in order to support children's development. Babies benefit from regular access to a carefully developed area that is appropriate to their stages of development. They enjoy crawling on the soft textured floor and developing their physical abilities climbing up onto the chute. Toddlers benefit from sensitive interactions with practitioners as they enjoy sensory and messy play opportunities. The older children take turns and share with each other well.
- The youngest children benefit from the frequent use of songs and rhymes to develop their literacy skills and awareness of language. Babies and toddlers show enjoyment in their learning and emerging communication skills. Most children are making good progress in their early language and communication. They enjoy creating imaginative stories in the outdoors and confidently assume roles and act out the story with the support of practitioners. Practitioners interact well with children during free play to extend communication and support children's language development. Children regularly create line drawings of themselves, which show progression over time in terms of the detail included.
- Babies and toddlers are gaining an understanding of number through daily routines. Older children are making good progress in early numeracy. They count naturally when preparing snack and setting the table for lunch. They use mathematical language appropriately as they play to compare size, length, weight and shape of different objects. In the outdoors, they use problem-solving skills to construct an obstacle course with open-ended materials.
- Practitioners confidently articulate progress children have made in their learning. Records of Achievement are used to record episodes of learning and experiences and learning at home. The manager has correctly identified that the tracking of children's progress across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is not yet sufficiently robust. This is a priority for development in the current improvement plan.
- The setting has an inclusive ethos where children are valued and respected. The recent introduction of a practitioner working with targeted children and small groups should support equity. As this role develops, practitioners should evaluate the strategies used to ensure the greatest impact on the progress children make in their learning.

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.