

Summarised inspection findings

Murrayburn Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

4 February 2025

Key contextual information

Murrayburn Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is part of Murrayburn Primary School and is located within the school building. Accommodation includes one large playroom, and a large outdoor area accessed directly from the playroom. The nursery is registered for 30 children attending at any one time, from three years old to those not yet attending school. Twenty-nine children currently attend for 1140 hours of funded ELC. The nursery is open during term time from 8.30 am to 3 pm from Monday to Thursday and from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm on a Friday. The nursery is managed by the headteacher, with responsibility delegated to a depute headteacher who took over this new remit in August 2023. The day-to-day management is undertaken by an early years officer who commenced in February 2024. Staffing also includes three early years practitioners and a part-time early years assistant. The nursery experienced significant staffing instabilities towards the end of 2023. However, staffing has now stabilised with a new team in place.

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

- The nursery team has developed an appropriate vision, values and aims, in consultation with families and children. Practitioners display the values of respect, kindness, honesty and resilience very effectively in their day-to-day interactions with parents, each other and children. They share the nursery's values skilfully with children, presenting them in child-friendly language and reinforcing them through stories, awards and play experiences.
- The recently appointed early years officer provides strong and very effective leadership. In her short time in post, she has focused very successfully on improving outcomes for children. Practitioners managed the recent unsettled period very well and displayed strong teamwork. The depute headteacher meets regularly with the early years officer to discuss key topics including wellbeing and improvement planning. Practitioners would now benefit from stronger strategic guidance from the school leadership team. This guidance should support staff to clarify and evaluate the impact of recent changes.
- The nursery team's approach to improvement involves all stakeholders. Parents, children and partners play an active role in shaping the nursery's priorities. The well-structured improvement plan focuses appropriately on key aspects of children's attainment and learning experiences. During the recent period of significant staffing transition, practitioners developed and implemented an interim improvement plan. This included appropriate short-term targets to ensure that necessary improvements were taken forward quickly. Moving forward, practitioners should make more use of national and local guidance to support strategic evaluation and ongoing improvement.
- The early years officer and practitioners use a helpful quality assurance calendar. This ensures that most aspects of the life and work of the nursery are kept under review. The early years

officer evaluates the quality and impact of children's learning and development well. Practitioners are becoming increasingly reflective about their professional performance. This is helping to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. Senior school leaders now need to undertake observations of the quality of work in the playroom and provide feedback to practitioners. Staff need to ensure that, following feedback, action is taken to support ongoing improvements.

- Practitioners undertake important leadership roles. These have resulted in high-quality learning for children on their rights, outdoor learning and aspects of numeracy. They have involved children in a worthwhile range of leadership opportunities. For example, older children act as role models helping younger children to settle, supporting them in their new routines.
- Practitioners have undertaken important professional learning. This has engaged them in a project to increase children's participation, strengthen their voice and promote their leadership. The positive impact has included notable improvements to children's experiences at snack and lunch time, and children's role as leaders of their own learning.

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

- Practitioners have developed relationships with children that are consistently warm, supportive and nurturing. Children have time, space and freedom to explore the playroom areas both indoors and outdoors. As a result, the atmosphere in the nursery is purposeful and calm. In morning sessions, almost all children are highly motivated and engage well with the learning experiences. Many children concentrate for lengthy periods, exploring and interacting with a wide range of resources which encourage imagination and independence. A minority of children are less focused in the afternoon. Practitioners should offer different resources and experiences to re-engage children during these sessions.
- With a high level of support from staff and very good role modelling, children are learning to manage their emotions. Practitioners show skill in using restorative language to help children resolve disagreements calmly. This is resulting in children playing well together by sharing and cooperating.
- Practitioners demonstrate a well-developed understanding of child development and how young children learn. They have planned spaces thoughtfully, encouraging children to observe, create and investigate. As a next step, there is a need to strengthen digital learning.
- Practitioners interact very effectively with children to support and enrich their learning. They use commentary, explanation and open-ended questioning to encourage children to think more deeply. They consistently use differentiated strategies in their vocabulary, tone and gesture to scaffold and extend children's learning.
- The recently appointed early years officer works very well with practitioners to refine their procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress. The staff team has begun to observe children at play, forming their observations as stories for parents. These records now need to be more individual to each child. Staff make use of developmental milestone trackers to identify how children are progressing socially and physically. Practitioners should align their observations and trackers with national early level experiences and outcomes. Staff should use this information to plan next steps for groups and individuals.
- Practitioners plan children's learning to ensure coverage of the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). They plan play experiences based on children's own interests, increasing their motivation. Staff show skill in changing play spaces and resources to respond to children's emerging ideas. They have, correctly, identified the need to improve assessing and recording progress for children who need additional help with their learning. Practitioners know children very well and meet their needs effectively in the playroom. However, individual children's plans do not include short-term targets or detailed strategies for

staff to use. Practitioners should ensure that learning targets are clearly focused on what children need to learn, and that children's progress can be monitored.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners provide an appropriate curriculum that is play based and linked to seasonal changes and events throughout the year. Play spaces are planned around children's ideas and interests and staff make very good use of relevant books and artefacts to enrich topics.
- The staff team has a good understanding of CfE experiences and outcomes. They plan carefully experiences which are adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led. This approach encourages children's curiosity and helps ensure that children receive a broad and balanced range of play experiences.
- To achieve further progress, staff should enrich the curriculum by making more use of the local community and its facilities. They should involve visitors in sharing their skills with the children. Children could access the school gym each week to develop aspects of their physical skills.
- The staff team has developed very good arrangements for children starting nursery and for those moving on to P1. Practitioners offer a phased entry for new children and a high level of support to help them settle. Children moving to P1 enjoy a well-structured programme of visits to help them become familiar with their new class and teacher. The school involves nursery children fully in whole school events such as shows and assemblies.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners and families communicate warmly and openly. Parents spend time in the playroom at arrival and home time, and at 'stay and play' events. Trusting relationships and strong communication support parents and staff in sharing important information about children's learning and progress.
- All parents are invited to be part of their child's nursery experiences in a range of ways and appreciate these opportunities. They welcome the regular information they receive about the learning in nursery using an online platform. The staff team could make more use of parents' skills to support the ongoing development of the nursery.
- Practitioners have developed productive links with a range of partners. These include psychologists and health visitors, providing valuable support and guidance to plan for children's individual needs.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority.

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

- Children's wellbeing is central to the work of the nursery. Practitioners view children as unique individuals with their own needs and rights. They are kind and caring and treat children with respect, helping them to feel safe and secure. Practitioners provide positive role models for children, which helps promote positive relationships. Children demonstrate care and kindness to each other. A few older children help and support those who have recently settled into nursery. The staff team focuses strongly on supporting each other's wellbeing.
- Practitioners understand and promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children understand that they have a right to be listened to and their views taken into account. Practitioners use wellbeing vocabulary well in their everyday engagement with children. They use puppets and stories to discuss wellbeing with children in a developmentally appropriate way. The staff team shares the wellbeing indicators with children and a few children can talk knowledgeably about feeling safe, healthy and active.
- Practitioners are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities in relation to early learning and childcare. They are clear about how to keep children safe. Each child has a personal plan which outlines both their care and health needs. Practitioners update these plans in consultation with parents and, where appropriate, support agencies. This ensures that the nursery's strategies continue to be effective, reducing barriers to learning and supporting children to make the best possible progress. The early years officer records any child welfare concerns accurately. As a further improvement, the wider staff team now need to add any concerns they identify to the children's care plans.
- Children benefit from healthy snack and lunches. They enjoy their meals in a relaxed, unhurried environment. Practitioners support children to develop good social skills and table manners. Children benefit from fresh air and active physical outdoor play every day.
- Inclusion and equality are very well promoted throughout the nursery. The staff team has developed positive and trusting relationships with families, with a very good understanding of each child's circumstances. This strong partnership helps practitioners to respond well to children and their individual needs. Practitioners value and celebrate diversity, ensuring everyone is respected and included as part of the nursery. They treat children and each other with respect and support children to develop a positive attitude to people's differences. Children are developing a good understanding of diversity by celebrating different languages, festivals and customs. Practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children in learning about aspects of diversity beyond children's immediate experience. All staff are aware of possible barriers to accessing aspects of learning where there are additional costs for 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

- Children are making good progress in communication and early language. They are keen to talk and share their experiences with adults and other children. Many listen closely to stories and show interest in any related illustrations. Children learn about authors and illustrators and have composed their own story books. Almost all recognise their name and make marks confidently using pencils, markers and chalk. They make good use of books to locate information. Staff should increase their focus on environmental print including exemplars at the writing area to extend children's skills.
- Children make good progress in mathematics. Many can count to 10 and beyond and enjoy counting their jumps and steps outdoors. Most children fit shapes together and a few complete complex jigsaws. Children learn about sizes by comparing and ordering different structures during block play. A few children use mathematical expressions accurately, for example taller than and shorter than. Children learn about capacity as they pour liquids into different sized containers. Staff should extend children's access to a wider range of mathematical equipment, for example timers and measuring tools to support further learning.
- Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They move confidently around the nursery and access materials independently. They persevere when undertaking outdoor challenges. Children are very safety conscious and a few confidently risk assess their outdoor resources and experiences. They access a wide range of books to support their feelings and use cosy enclosed spaces if they need some quiet time. Almost all children are confident climbing, balancing and using wheeled toys.
- Children learn about sustainability as they plant, grow, harvest and prepare vegetables to eat. Their wider achievements both in nursery and at home are celebrated by praise, certificates and recognition at assemblies. Practitioners encourage parents to share children's successes with the nursery.
- Practitioners are at the early stages of tracking children's progress over time. They recognise the need to develop this further to demonstrate progress more effectively. The staff team appreciates that better information about children's knowledge and skills will support planning for future learning.
- Practitioners know children and families very well and treat everyone equally and with respect. They have a clear understanding of children's individual circumstances and are aware of any

potential barriers to learning. Their sensitive and thoughtful interventions and individualised support have a positive impact on children's learning development.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children received warm and nurturing approaches from staff, which contributed to their overall wellbeing. We observed loving relationships being developed through kind and compassionate interactions from staff. Staff knew children well and were responsive to their individual needs, those who needed comfort were provided it. This contributed to children feeling secure, valued and confident within the environment. Family feedback was positive, one parent commented, "Staff are amazing, so supportive I honestly couldn't ask for better".

Good systems were in place to ensure children's dietary and cultural needs were met. Snacks and meals were nutritious and offered choice. Children were involved in choosing and preparing snacks and helped to set the table for lunchtime. As a result, children were developing independence, learning important life skills and fostering a sense of responsibility.

Children experienced unhurried and sociable mealtimes. Two sittings for lunch were available, this meant children could decide when they were ready to eat, minimising interruptions to play. They were familiar with mealtime routines; we observed older children helping younger children within these daily experiences. Staff sat with children as they ate. They provided encouragement and support when needed. Children were able to pour their own water and self-serve food from the table. As a result, children enjoyed a positive social experience, and staff were close by to keep them safe.

Personal plans were in place to support children's overall needs. These were completed in collaboration with families and updated in line with best practice guidance. Strategies to support children were recorded, and their impact reviewed at times. To further enhance children's overall wellbeing, the service could review and consolidate personal planning systems. This could include ensuring strategies of support and significant information is documented, dated and reviewed regularly. This would support all staff to consistently meet children's individual needs.

Staff worked in collaboration with children, families, and other professionals to identify and plan for children who required additional support. Child planning meetings and team meetings were used to identify and share strategies to best support children. As a result, children got the support they needed. Families spoke highly of the staff team and the support they and their children received. One parent told us, "The nursery staff have given us some helpful things to try at home, these are working really well and we are seeing progress using these at home too".

Child protection procedures were in place and staff were aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. While safeguarding was managed effectively, wellbeing concerns were stored separately and no reference to concerns were recorded in children's personal plans. Signposting staff to this information will further enhance keeping children safe and protected from harm (we have addressed with an area for improvement in 3.1).

Medication was stored securely, and most medication records were accurate. To further enhance medication management, termly audits could be more effective to ensure accurate and up-to-date records. Additionally, emergency flow charts should be stored with medication for easy access. The service promptly addressed these issues following our feedback (refer to area for improvement under 3.1).

Personal care routines, such as toileting and nappy changing, were undertaken with kindness and respect. Staff prioritised children's privacy and dignity, ensuring they felt safe and cared for.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun and engaged in a variety of play experiences. They were happy and confident in leading their own play and learning. Staff were responsive to children's interests. For example, some children were observed, looking at books and retelling stories. Staff skilfully extended this opportunity, leading to children creating their own 'story book'. Children were proud to share their ideas and stories with inspectors. This resulted in deep levels of engagement and opportunities to extend children's fine motor skills, communication and literacy. Across the afternoon we observed less children engaged in play spaces and experiences. We suggested staff review opportunities and resources throughout the day to sustain the high levels of engagement observed in the morning.

Staff had good knowledge of how children learn through play. Open ended resources and staff interactions enhanced children's play experiences. We observed children transporting objects across both indoors and outdoors and using material to create enclosures. This meant that children were able to lead their play without unnecessary limitations.

Planning was child centred and responsive to children's individual needs and interests. An understanding of children's interests, gained through observations, was used to create the play and learning spaces. For example, more dolls and resources had been introduced into the home corner following a child having a new baby at home. By considering and building upon children's wider life experiences, staff supported children's learning and development.

Intentional planning was focused around seasonal and yearly events. The service could strengthen how they assess children's learning to inform intentional planning. This would better ensure that children are offered challenge in their play and learning and any need for support is identified early.

There was good use of the garden to enrich children's experiences. Further use of the local community would stimulate children's interests and enhance play and learning opportunities.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was welcoming, warm and inviting, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Small touches such as lamps, fairy lights and soft furnishing created a cosy homely environment. The story corner and mezzanine provided a space for children to rest and relax. While the welcoming entrance area with children's own pegs, supported children's sense of belonging. These spaces contributed to creating a calm nurturing environment where children mattered.

Sensitively structured play spaces had been created to ensure there was a breadth of meaningful learning opportunities. Furniture and resources reflected children's development stage and interests. Staff understood the positive impact of outdoor learning and had created an

indoor/outdoor ethos. Outdoors, wheeled toys, big blocks equipment were available to develop gross motor skills, negotiate spaces and participate in risky play. The well thought through musical area encouraged children to express themselves, they created their own music and danced along to others singing. This meant that children's needs and varied style of learning was being met.

The use of attractive displays and childrens work promoted discussion and encouraged children to revisit their learning experiences. While visuals and photos supported daily routines and communication.

Various safety measures were in place to keep children safe. Risk assessments, locks on gates, high handles and a secure door entry system contributed to keeping children safe. Staff worked well together to identify and remove risks within both indoor and outdoor environment. Across the day they communicated well and worked together to ensure children were accounted for. We encouraged the service to review the steps children use to access the garden. There was no handrail or ramp to support children who were less physically able. This would also contribute to a more inclusive environment for all children.

Infection prevention and control procedures were effective in reducing the spread of infection. We observed staff hand washing at key times of the day and children were familiar and confident in handwashing and toothbrushing routines. Robust toilet risk assessments promoted safe practices. Daily and weekly check lists were supportive in maintaining an overall, clean and safe environment for children.

Children were kept safe and well. Accidents and incidents were managed well and appropriate first aid provided when required. Reporting, recording and auditing effectively identified risks and helped keep children safe.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The shared vision and values of the service positively informed practice. Staff were enthusiastic and committed to moving the service forward, despite recent changes in both the early years team and senior leadership. The team was led by a hardworking and knowledgeable Practitioner who was supported by the Deputy Head Teacher both pastorally and by offering advice for children who required additional support. The ethos of the service and staff interactions supported an inclusive environment where children and their families were made to feel welcome and supported. Families we spoke to were positive about the service. As a result, positive relationships contributed to best outcomes for children.

Children and families were beginning to be involved in developing the service.

The big book captured childrens voice and documented recent improvements of the outdoor space. Families were encouraged to feedback through stay and play, family consultations and daily dialogue. Parental engagement was identified as a priority within the improvement plan, continuing to engage and involve families in the life of the service will contribute to influencing further improvements.

An improvement plan was in place and the senior leadership team were in the initial stages of their improvement journey. They had started to work through some of their key priorities, including making improvements to their indoor and outdoor spaces. Some information being recorded for children, including their personal plans and learning journeys, were not documented effectively

enough to support their development. To support continuous improvement, the service should strengthen their quality assurance and self-evaluation procedures. This would allow them to identify inconsistencies and gaps in their processes and take a more planned approach to improvement (see area for improvement 1).

Staff had participated in annual appraisals, providing opportunities for reflection on strengths and development needs. We had a discussion around leadership and ensuring people's roles and responsibilities are clear. This would contribute ensuring these are manageable and sustainable over time and build on the current quality of experience across the service.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

4.3 Staff deployment

Effective staff deployment and good levels of staffing contributed to positive outcomes for children. Children benefited from a staff team who were supportive of each other and communicated well together. Arrangements were in place at busier times of the day, such as mealtimes and during transitions. Additional staff, who knew children well and provided valuable care, were available to support children during these busier times. This meant children received a consistent approach supporting from a staff team who knew and understood children needs.

Staff were flexible throughout the day to ensure effective supervision and meet children's needs. For example, staff knew individual children well and moved with them between both indoors and outside to provide appropriate supervision, care and support. They had developed positive and supportive relationships with each other and communicated well when a task took them away from their responsibilities. This resulted in effective supervision, quality engagement and provided higher levels of support to children where needed.

The skilled staff team worked together to ensure high-quality outcomes for children. Staff were suitably qualified and had a range of skills and experience that they used to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for children and families. The culture of support between the staff team meant they worked well together, enriching children and families' experience. Regular opportunities were available throughout the week for staff to discuss and reflect on children's needs. This time also provided opportunities to support each other and enhanced overall staff wellbeing. The national induction resource had recently been introduced and mentoring supported new staff to build and extend their knowledge and skills.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the service had one requirement and one area for improvement. We were satisfied with the action taken; this is illustrated in the body of the report. As a result of this inspection, a new area for improvement has been identified.

Area for improvement

To improve outcomes for children and ensure that there is a culture of improvement in the service, the provider should strengthen their quality assurance systems. These should enable them to monitor and improve the way they record and plan for children's care, play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

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.