Simpson Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Simpson Primary School
Leyland Road
Wester Inch Village
Bathgate
EH48 2SG

Telephone: 01506 656 371

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 April 2025

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2007155334

About the service

Simpson Primary School Nursery is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service for a maximum of 80 children aged three years to entry into primary school.

The service is provided by West Lothian Council and offers funded early learning and childcare to eligible children.

Situated in Bathgate, it is in the centre of the community of Wester Inch village. It is housed within Simpson Primary School. The children have access to a large, open plan playroom, toilets, a cloakroom and a large outdoor space accessible from the playroom. It is situated close to local amenities with a park across the road.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 28 April 2025 from 08:30 to 17:00 hours. We returned on Tuesday 29 April 2025 to complete inspection and provide feedback. 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 and received written feedback from 16 parents and carers

- Spoke with staff and the management team

- Observed practice and daily life

- Reviewed documents.

Feedback was provided to the senior leadership team and a representative from West Lothian Council.

Key messages

- Children's outcomes were improved through significant effort to address the outstanding requirement and areas of improvement made at the last inspection.

-Children enjoy a nurturing, respectful, and responsive environment created by knowledgeable and attentive staff.

- Children's accessibility, independence, engagement and positive wellbeing is significantly enhanced through improvements to the playroom and outdoor spaces.

- An appropriate pace of change and clear vision from the leadership team is enhancing provision through creating a reflective culture.

- Staff's deployment and relevant training in safeguarding has enhanced children's safety and protection.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children benefitted from loving, warm and responsive care and attention from staff. They were quickly comforted when needed through being picked up and cuddled. Staff were supportive of those children who required a bit more support and knew all children very well. They described their preferences and used this knowledge to provide resources which supported them to feel secure. All parents told us they found staff friendly and approachable.

Nappy changes and other personal care needs were managed with respectful and quiet interactions maintaining children's privacy and dignity. The sensitive approaches meant children received the right care when needed with minimal disruption to their play. Where encouragement was needed this was conducted in a fun way to support toilet learning, for example, signing the 'skip to the loo' song. This provided a cue for children in their learning to manage their own toileting.

Significant improvements to the mealtime experience contributed to children enjoying a relaxed and social experience. Rolling lunch and snacks were now meeting children's need to eat when ready and seconds were available for those who were hungrier. This enabled them to have some control over mealtimes. Staff were highly vigilant to choking risks and children's allergies and supported their wellbeing through close supervision. Children experienced opportunities to self-serve their lunches and clear up after themselves. This opportunity for independence should now be developed across snack time, including increased opportunity to prepare snacks.

Although no children needed a sleep during our inspection there was now a cosy and inviting dedicated space to enable this. This allowed children to rest and relax when needed. Children enjoyed using this space to lie and look at fairy lights whilst chatting with a friend. This contributed to their feelings of safety and security in the service.

Children's health and wellbeing was maintained through the recording and sharing of accidents along with the safe storage, recording and administration of medications held. Staff closely monitored children who required ongoing medication such as insulin pumps and were confident in action needed in the event of any changes in children's wellbeing. A medication audit helped to identify expiring medication. We asked the service to ensure that parents were involved in the termly review of medication to ensure medication is still required and there are no changes to advised dosages. This would support continuity of children's care and wellbeing.

Children's rights were promoted through staff's awareness raising across different activities, such as their colour monster activity. Children's voices were actively promoted within personal plans, learning journals, book reviews and planning using mind mapping. Floor books demonstrated the strength of children's voices in influencing their own learning.

Children's safety was enhanced through the revised and robust procedures in place for the recording and reporting of child protection and wellbeing concerns. Staff were all confident in taking appropriate steps to

ensure immediate action was taken and were aware of who they should report their concerns to. Revised training and support in recording pastoral care notes had contributed to more accurate recording and reporting, contributing to children's protection.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children had fun and were meaningfully engaged in their play and learning experiences. All children were busy throughout their whole time in the service and were able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor play spaces. Children cooperated well with each other and were purposeful in their play, with many spending extended periods of time in their own self-directed play activities such as building a house from paper. The free flow access to the garden had enriched children's play as they made choices over where to play.

Responsive planning meant children had control over their play and learning, as their needs and interest were met. Staff had developed their understanding of consultative planning which was supporting them to be responsive to children and extend learning in meaningful ways. The floor books strongly supported children in identifying and assessing their own learning.

Children experienced increasing opportunities to link with the community and make use of community resources. For example, through litter picks, visits to the parks, shopping at the supermarket and local walks. We asked the service to now progress with more regular opportunities for forest play to enhance children's connection with the natural world and stimulate their imagination and creativity.

Play spaces provided opportunities for children to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. Staff supported and facilitated children's understanding through relevant games, activities and discussions which promoted their understanding. Literacy was evident across the playroom and outdoor area supporting children's understanding of the link between the written and spoken word. Lots of opportunities for singing and sharing books with staff right across the nursery helped support and extend children's learning and language. We asked the service to take a closer look at numeracy within the home corner as part of their ongoing audits. We also encouraged them to progress their own plans for increasing the use of communication tools to enhance all children's communication in an inclusive way.

Children were making progress in their learning and development which was demonstrated within their learning journals. We recognised the quality of written observations had improved with regular input and support through training and development. This was allowing a clearer focus on learning, identification of relevant next steps and supporting planning of children's play and learning, enabling children's success.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

As a result of review and improved playroom layout children experienced better quality play and learning. This made more areas accessible and resulted in increased fun and enjoyment for children who used the whole space well. The provision of the cosy den space proved opportunity for children to rest, relax and just feel hidden. Improvements to the exit door to the garden also helped maintain a comfortable room temperature.

Children benefitted from lots of space for play both indoors and out. The playroom and resources were in good condition and easily accessible to children supporting their choice and independence. Development of the garden space had increased children's engagement and enjoyment of this area. This provided a breadth of play and learning experiences. The service should now continue to build on the loose parts materials and consider adding other options to enable children to access water more freely for play and drinking.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place ensuring children benefitted from a clean and hygienic environment. Hand washing was supported well and staff role modelled this. The nappy changing area enabled appropriate storage of items and all hazardous materials were stored appropriately. This supported children's continued safety and reduced their risk of cross infection.

Children enjoyed risky play with regular opportunities to climb trees in the garden and use a fire pit. These regular opportunities for experiencing risk in play helped to build their physical confidence and enhanced their resilience, enabling them to cope with and overcome challenges. Staff spoke about using 'SIMOA' (safety, inspect, monitor, observe and act) within their work such as doing regular head counts. Children told us, "Simoa keeps us safe, he's over there." Alongside use of 'Simoa' the elephant, staff regularly reminded children of a being a 'Safe Sally.' This supported their understanding of potential harm and celebrated their achievements in being safe.

Staff were aware of and confident regarding the importance of confidentiality and management of children's information. Personal information was displayed discreetly or stored securely. This ensured only the right people had access to this and promoted children's privacy.

Children's accessibility, independence, engagement, and positive wellbeing is significantly enhanced through improvements to the playroom and outdoor spaces.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Children were experiencing improved outcomes because of the vision delivered by the leadership team. This was building staff confidence and enabling a whole team approach to driving improvement. This included building reflective practice across the whole team which was evident during the inspection. For example, staff considered suggestions made by inspectors and quickly raised these with management for further reflection and action.

Children's experiences were improving due to the appropriate pace of change and prioritising of improvements needed through appropriate action planning. This allowed time to include the whole team in ongoing developments. The service should continue to measure progress and outcomes for children as a result of changes made to ensure positive impact and ensure practice is embedded.

Opportunities were available for children and families to be involved through a variety of family engagement experiences. For example, stay and play, gardening club, peep, QR codes and online sessions. Family feedback on these activities was actively gathered enabling staff to make further changes to meet needs. One parent told us, "I feel there is plenty of opportunity to voice my opinions." The service should now

consider how they could further involve children and families in the ongoing self-evaluation of provision and how to share and evidence this.

A shared leadership approach was in place which enabled all staff to take responsibility for different areas of practice. Recent best practice visits to other settings were enabling staff to look outwards and was linked to their leadership roles. Staff were using this to help them develop provision and make planned improvements.

Quality assurance processes had been further developed, and staff were actively using best practice guidance to support them and were familiarising themselves with new guidance. They had begun to use challenge questions in the self-evaluation floor book to help them consider how to improve experiences for children. Some quality assurance processes around auditing and monitoring could now be further developed, such as ensuring identified actions from audits are maintained and clear action recorded following observations of practice. We also suggested considering developing the current verbal PDSA (plan, do, study, act) discussions into written plans to support progression.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

Stability of the staff team over a long period contributed to children's continuity of care and support. Where temporary staff were needed, they were already familiar with the setting and the children, enhancing children's sense of security. Children and families were kept informed about any staff changes through the See Saw 'app' and discussions and introductions at the door upon arrival and collection of children.

Most families were very happy about relationships with staff. They told us, "They are friendly, professional and keep us updated with my child's day" and, "I am always included and feel very welcome in the nursery. Everyone is very polite and excited to tell me how my child is doing."
The review of lunch time meant that staff lunch breaks were well managed and were supported with additional staffing during this period. This contributed to children's positive mealtime experience, safety, and staff wellbeing.

Inductions were in place for new and supply staff using the national induction resource. Staff spoke positively about the early information provided to them which included information about child protection guidelines. This enabled them to better meet children's needs.
Staff communicated very well across the day to support children's movement, request materials or to enhance children's play and learning. Staff discussed how their daily huddle and Friday meetings were effective in supporting consistency of approaches and sharing knowledge to meet children's needs.

Staff mostly maintained appropriate supervision of children indoors and outside, supporting their continued safety. New staff were supported by experienced staff in managing the door. This allowed them to be introduced to and build relationships with families, contributing to the safety of children upon collection. Most of the time staff deployed themselves well across the spaces, maintaining an overview whilst continuing to support children within their allocated areas. The reviewed approach to taking parents into the family room for discussions on collection further enhanced supervision and safety of children.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 29 November 2024, the provider must ensure that children are safeguarded and protected from harm. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

a) Staff are competent, skilled and knowledgeable in relation to local and national child protection guidance relevant to their role.

b) Staff apply their learning to maintenance of detailed chronologies and processes for reporting concerns into their practice.

This is in order to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/210) 4(1)(a) - Requirements to make proper provision for the health and welfare of service users.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

This requirement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement
Staff had accessed additional, focused training in child protection and were now all confident in the actions to take in addressing any protection concerns along with ensuring follow up actions had been completed. Chronologies were held and staff were being supported in how to access and use these for pastoral care notes. Child protection concerns were appropriately recorded and notifications made. There had been no further child protection concerns since the previous inspection but we saw robust systems were now in place.

Met - within timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To enable all children to be cared for in an environment that meets their needs and supports them to reach their full potential, the provider should as a minimum ensure play spaces offer a range of resources and materials that are developmentally appropriate to effectively challenge and stimulate children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Additional resourcing indoors and outdoors, increased access to outdoors along with consideration of layout of the playroom had a positive impact on children's levels of engagement. Resources mostly supported and challenged children and where we identified some areas where this could be further enhanced for some children staff were immediately reflective of this.

This area for improvement has therefore been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To enable all children to make progress at a pace that is right for them, the provider should ensure observations and tracking of individuals are focused clearly on strengths, significant learning and specific next steps. This should then inform responsive planning. Observations should be regular so that there is ongoing understanding of the stage that each child is at in their play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff training and ongoing support had led to improved observation recording which identified children's learning along with tracking to support next steps in learning. The service should continue to support staff to ensure consistency across the whole team.

This area for improvement has therefore been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children are safe and the service is effectively managed, the provider should ensure that required notifications are made to the Care Inspectorate in line with guidance as set out in the document 'Records that all registered care services (except childminding) must keep and guidance on notification reporting'.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Relevant notifications requested at the previous inspection had been submitted and management team were fully aware of notification reporting guidance for future notifications.

This area for improvement has therefore been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To support children's wellbeing and learning and promote the continued development and improvement of the service, the manager should ensure robust self-evaluation and quality assurance is taking place. This is so that improvement is focused on the places that will have direct impact on improving outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Self evaluation and quality assurance had been developed which was enabling a culture of reflection across the whole team. This was supporting regular monitoring of various aspects of practice and had supported prioritising for improvement since the previous inspection and led to positive practice at an appropriate pace.

This area for improvement has therefore been met.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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