

Muirhouse Primary Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

66 Barons Road
Motherwell
ML1 2NB

Telephone: 01698 274 995

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 October 2025

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015397

About the service

Muirhouse Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care for a maximum of 50 children not yet attending primary school. At the time of inspection 38 children were registered to the service.

Care is provided from two converted classrooms within the primary school, which is located within a residential area in Motherwell, North Lanarkshire. The service is situated close to shops, transport links and other amenities. Children are cared for between two large playrooms and have direct access to a secure garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 30 September and 2 October 2025 between 08:30 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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
- reviewed electronic feedback from five parents
- spoke with staff and management
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within leadership.

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

- Quality assurance processes and self evaluation were at an early stage and should be developed and embedded into practice to ensure they are meaningful and effective.
- Children's health and wellbeing was enhanced through daily access to outdoor play.
- The service should continue to develop play spaces to promote children's curiosity, creativity and interests.
- Staff knew children well and were developing warm, caring relationships with them to support their wellbeing and help them feel valued.
- New children were supported with a flexible settling in period, supporting them to feel safe and secure.
- The provider should make improvements to ensure children have a positive lunchtime experience.
- Staff should continue to review daily transitions to help ensure they support children's needs and play preference.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the settings work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The service's vision, values and aims were displayed across the nursery and wider school community and reflected their ethos and aspirations for children and families who attended the service. These had been created with parents and supported staff and families to understand what to expect from the service.

Staff were positive about the service and all stated that they felt supported by the leadership team. Staff engaged with the inspection process, demonstrating a positive attitude towards change and improvement. They were responsive to suggestions made during the inspection to continue to improve outcomes for children and families.

Quality assurance processes included a detailed improvement plan, which identified key areas the service wished to improve, with a particular focus being placed on a quality learning environment. We agreed this was important to scaffold and extend children's play and learning. We encouraged the service to continue with this and ensure that all staff were able to reflect on and contribute to the service's improvement journey. Whilst the service had identified where improvement could be made, we discussed developing monitoring processes to ensure this is embedded.

Management and staff were developing their confidence in using self-evaluation and audit tools as part of their quality assurance processes. This was beginning to support staff to develop key areas of practice such as, mealtimes and outdoor play. To support continuous improvement, approaches to quality assurance should be more robust. This should include monitoring and auditing of personal plans, children's observations and environment reviews. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Opportunities to include families in the service and welcome their feedback was provided through questionnaires, informal chats and online platforms. Information was shared with families through a range of communication methods, such as newsletters and daily conversations, which helped families feel included. Parents told us, "we always appreciate being given the opportunity to provide feedback through surveys following nursery events. These surveys allow us to share our thoughts, suggestions, and experiences" and "it helps us feel involved in the nursery community and gives us a chance to contribute to ongoing improvement." However, some parents felt opportunities to contribute towards the development of the service was limited. The service should continue to develop partnership working with parents in all aspects of nursery life. For example, developing 'a you said we did' format to share with parents how their views have influenced the service.

There was a system in place to monitor the maintenance of the environment and equipment. These had identified some areas where improvement was needed. However, during the inspection we identified some areas that required further attention. For example, general maintenance and housekeeping of the building. We discussed the importance of children experiencing a clean, safe and well-maintained environment. The service should develop measures to monitor this. (See Area for Improvement 2).

Newly appointed staff told us they had been warmly welcomed by the staff and management team. They commented that their induction was positive and helped them to understand their roles and responsibilities, and also the expectations of the management team. We discussed where the service could further develop their induction process using the 'National Induction Resource' to support reflections and monitoring of practice during the initial stages of staff's employment. One staff member told us "new staff are paired with a staff member that are able to support and answer any questions to make them feel welcome and included."

Areas for improvement

1.

To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the provider should implement robust quality assurance processes covering key areas of practice. This should include, but not be limited to, practice that supports 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 state, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19).

2.

To support children's health and wellbeing the provider should ensure children receive care in a clean, well looked after and well-maintained environment. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring all areas are clean and identified repairs are actioned. For example, repairs to window ledges.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

Children play and learn 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate, where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Most children were engaged in their play and having fun. Children told us "I like playing with the train set" and "its fun when we play on the bikes." Life skills and independence were promoted, as staff encouraged children to try for themselves. For example, when getting dressed for outside play. Staff praised and celebrated children's achievements, this helped to support children's wellbeing and self-esteem. Children told us "we get our waterproofs on over here, watch me do it all on my own" and "I love playing in the garden."

Children were mostly leading their own play and learning through a range of planned and spontaneous experiences indoors. A free-flow approach to play meant children could make play choices, which promoted child led play. However, children's play was interrupted to support the transition between key parts of the day, for example, welcome time and lunchtime. We asked the service to review 'welcome time', to further enhance experiences offered, ensuring they are responsive to children's needs and interest. (This has been reported under the heading 'children are supported to achieve').

Careful consideration had been given to playrooms to support children's play, offering spaces for children to make choices and develop their ideas. The service should continue with this approach to further develop spaces, adding further resources to ensure children have a rich, curious, enabling and stimulating environment to support their learning and development. For example, adding more authentic, cultural and real resources within the house corner and adding more resources to the creative area. This would help encourage imaginative play, spark curiosity and increase opportunities for children to extend and consolidate their learning through play. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Children's wellbeing was promoted through daily access to outdoors. We recognised that the service had plans to further improve the outdoor environment. Staff agreed they needed more resources, to help create stimulating play spaces for children. This would include adding further toys, resources and open ended materials to ensure children are appropriately challenged and consistently experience high quality play and learning experiences. For example, further development of loose parts outdoors would help support learning experiences that stimulates curiosity, exploration and risky play. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Children's literacy and numeracy was supported through a variety of ways. For example, children enjoyed listening to stories and exploring the smartboard with staff. In addition, some children were engaged for periods of time exploring small blocks, counting and using mathematical language. We discussed the value of ensuring that there was further resources to extend children's numeracy and literacy skills, throughout the nursery environment, both indoors and outdoors. This would include a variety of books, mark making materials, units of measurement and print at the children's level. This would further support the children's early language, literacy and numeracy development.

Staff were cheerful, smiley and mostly engaged well with children. However, while their interactions were warm and caring, there were several missed opportunities for staff to use skilled questioning to support children's learning through meaningful conversations. Management should continue to support staff to develop their skills, confidence and knowledge in supporting and extending children's play. (See Area of Improvement 2).

Children could access spaces within the local community to support their health and wellbeing. This included visit to green space to deliver forest school approach. This was supporting children to develop an awareness of their local community and surrounding world. The service should continue to build on these opportunities. One parent told us "our child spends a great deal of time outdoors at nursery and gained so much from the forest school experience last year. As parents, we would love to see more of this type of outdoor learning implemented regularly."

Areas for improvement

1. To help ensure children are able to access a variety of stimulating play opportunities, the toys and materials available to children should be improved to support child led play. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring a wide range of sensory opportunities to stimulate children's curiosity, creativity and imagination and increasing the range of toys and materials available outdoors.

This is to ensure care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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 to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.' (HSCS 2.27).

2. To support staff to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of children's play, learning and development, the provider should arrange for staff to undertake related professional development activities. Staff should then reflect on their learning and embed it in their practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which states: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14).

Children are supported to achieve 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate, where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Overall, children experienced warm, nurturing care that promoted their wellbeing. We observed staff join in with play experiences, helping children have fun at nursery. For example, children enjoyed giggling with staff as they joined in with action songs. Comfort, cuddles and reassurance were provided for children. This supported them to feel secure and valued. Parents told us staff were "welcoming and helpful" and "approachable and friendly."

Children's transitions had been thoughtfully considered to support them when they settled into the service. Staff took time to get to know children and families well. This helped children build secure attachments to staff. As a result, children were settled and engaged in play. However, we discussed where routines and daily transitions could be developed further to support children's wellbeing and play opportunities. This included reviewing the pace of the day to enable children to direct and lead their play and make meaningful choices at key times. For example, providing children further choices at the beginning of the day, as we found current approaches were adult led. (See Area for Improvement 1).

A keyworker system was in place to support relationships and connections with children and parents. However, parents shared that staff shortages and inconsistencies in staffing were making it difficult to ensure consistency in care for children. Parents told us, "due to ongoing staffing changes, I feel that [my child's] needs are not being fully met because of a lack of consistency in their care" and "ongoing staffing challenges have left us concerned about the consistency of [my child's] experiences and overall progress. The service had reviewed staffing and a more stable staff team were now in place, which was helping to support continuity of children's care needs.

Personal care needs were delivered in a warm, kind and respectful manner. This included children being asked if they would like to have their nappy changed, promoting respect. The service had plans to develop nappy changing facilities. We agreed this would help to ensure children's privacy and dignity was respected.

Personal plans contained information regarding children's health and care needs. These were created in partnership with parents which helped to promote consistent care for children. Whilst information had been gathered to ensure staff were aware of children interests, likes and needs, these should be reviewed frequently to ensure they reflected children's current preferences. We asked the service to ensure all personal plans contained clear strategies to support children's individual learning and development.

Parents told us "we've had plenty of opportunities to discuss our child's progress through parent consultations and review meetings" and "I do receive updates sporadically, however, it would be better to have more interaction with staff to discuss my child individually." The service shared they were in the process of reviewing the format for personal plans. Management should develop systems to monitor personal plans to help ensure consistency in their approach.

The service were in the process of reviewing their lunchtime approaches. Whilst management had given consideration to how lunches should be delivered, this was not observed in practice. Lunchtimes were busy and opportunities to promote children's independence was limited. The service had identified where changes could be made to promote children's independence. This included opportunities to self serve and developing a rolling lunch approach within playrooms. We agreed this would be beneficial in promoting children's choice, whilst also helping to develop a sociable, unhurried lunchtime experience.

Parents and carers were involved in nursery life. Planned events, such as stay and play sessions, had been well received by families and contributed to relationships that supported meeting children's needs. Parents told us "the recent stay and play session was very well-organised and offered a wide range of fantastic experiences for the children" and "we have really enjoyed taking part in stay and play sessions, outings and Forest School events with the nursery, and our child loves having us involved in these experiences." However, some parents told us they would like more communication from staff at the end of the day. We discussed the benefits of developing further opportunities for parents to discuss their child's day, helping to strengthen connections and relationships. We signposted management to the Care Inspectorate's document 'Me, my family and my childcare setting.'

Areas for improvement

1. To support children wellbeing, learning and development the provider should review the pace of the day. This should include, but is not limited to, welcome time and daily transitions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am empowered and enabled to be as independent and as in control of my life as I want and can be' (HSCS 2.2) and '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).

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Playing, learning and developing	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
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