

Kirkhill Nursery School Day Care of Children

Rashierigg Road
Broxburn
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 January 2026

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003017495

About the service

Kirkhill Nursery School is in Broxburn, West Lothian. They are registered to provide a daycare of children service to 72 children at any one time from aged two years to not yet attending primary school. No more than 10 children are two years.

The service is in a residential area of Broxburn, located within the primary school, close to green spaces and local amenities. Children have access to several play spaces, including an indoor/outdoor area, large, enclosed garden and a separate dining room.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 12 and 13 January 2026 between 08:30 and 17:00. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke and spent time with children using the service
- spoke with seven families and received feedback online from two families
- spoke with staff and the leadership team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

During this inspection we gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children and families benefitted from a nurturing approach that fostered positive relationships.
- Staff demonstrated genuine care and warmth, creating a welcoming and happy environment.
- Children were settled, engaged, and having fun, with play experiences influenced by their interests, supporting sustained engagement.
- The team is committed to offering high-quality learning indoors and outdoors, enabling children to explore and learn in varied environments.
- Children led their play while staff skilfully extended their interests, promoting independence and creativity.
- Staff worked very well together and deployed themselves effectively, ensuring children had full use of the large provision.
- Leadership roles within the team enhanced opportunities for children, including literacy, digital learning, and creative projects.

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	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

Leadership 5 – Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service had clear visions, values and aims displayed. Children, families and staff had recently been involved in reviewing these. Staff spoke about the importance of gathering the views of families to inform their values. Children had written the values, demonstrating examples of their input. Values were embedded in daily practice and reflected in children's experiences that promoted creativity, curiosity, happiness and a love of learning.

Staff consistently engaged in self-evaluation using best practice guidance. They had recently begun to use the new Quality Improvement Framework for the early learning and childcare sectors. Evidence recorded showed self-evaluation was purposeful, supported reflections, whilst identifying strengths and areas for development. The team understood the value of self-evaluation and its role in continuous improvement. Consultation with children evidenced their ideas for change and families told us they were regularly asked for their views to help develop the service. This demonstrated a strong commitment for improvement.

Quality assurance systems were well established, including effective checks of spaces and resources, children's journals and the digital platform used to share learning with families. Peer moderation and use of auditing toolkits further strengthened practice and experiences. For example, reviewing play opportunities throughout the environment. This further supported the team to identify what was working well and plan for developments to ensure breadth and challenge.

Leadership fostered a culture of support, trust and autonomy, enabling staff to take forward ideas confidently. Staff told us they felt valued and supported through regular opportunities for professional dialogue, personal development and team meetings. This positive culture contributed to a welcoming, inviting and nurturing environment for staff, children and families.

A skilled and stable team had been retained over time, which supported the continuity of care for children. There had not been recent staff recruitment in the setting with many staff members working at Kirkhill Nursery for a number of years. Staff who had joined the service over the last few years spoke positively about their induction experience and the support received from staff and the leadership team. As a result, children and families benefitted from consistency across the team that fostered positive connections.

Children play and learn 5 – Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Playing, learning and developing

Children were engaged in their chosen activities throughout the session, leading their play and making independent choices. They told us the best thing about coming to nursery was seeing the staff, playing with their friends and the toys. As a result, children were settled, happy and having fun.

The environment offered space indoors and outdoors, enabling children to explore, investigate and engage in risk benefit play. Staff planned and provided a wide range of rich, challenging experiences that promoted creativity, curiosity and sustained engagement. Families told us children were 'always' involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences to meet their individual needs and support their development.

Resources were high quality and plentiful, supporting imaginative play and problem-solving. Literacy and numeracy opportunities were embedded throughout the provision and staff skilfully used interactions to promote this further through songs, stories and conversations. Families told us children 'love' attending nursery. They liked that staff shared learning effectively through online and took time to talk with them daily. This meant families felt informed about how their child had spent their day.

Interactions were fun, warm and nurturing. Staff skilfully used questioning to encourage children's thinking and problem-solving. Staff demonstrated a respect for children, recognising a need for independence or intervening in a timely manner to scaffold learning. As a result, children were engaged for sustained periods.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of child development, they knew what was important to each child, their likes and preferences. Staff were confident at ensuring children had access to provision for their stage of development. For example, identifying needs for sensory and schematic play, whilst offering challenging activities that promoted problem solving, co-operation and thinking skills. This was important and ensured all children made progress at a pace right for them.

Promoting literacy through play had been identified as an improvement focus. All children were supported to make progress through a variety of experiences such as songs, storytelling and word-boost activities. We observed children recalling word boost words during daily routines and staff celebrated their achievements. Staff modelled language and used visuals supports where needed. We encouraged the service to strengthen their approach when using sign-a-long and symbols to ensure all staff were consistently using these to further support communication.

All staff had leadership roles that enhanced learning through opportunities for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), digital learning, literacy and creative projects. Staff spoke confidently about these experiences and the impact on learning. Families had regular opportunities to engage with these activities through stay and play and family sessions. This meant they were able to engage in fun experiences with their child.

Planning was influenced by children's interests and developmental stages. Staff used observations to inform responsive and consultative planning, ensuring a breadth of experiences for all age groups. Children's learning and progress was tracked, monitored and reviewed regularly. This meant they made progress through experiences that were shaped by their interests.

Digital platforms allowed families opportunities to see what children had been interested in. Observations shared were consistent and of a high standard, highlighting the skills children learned. Where appropriate, staff recorded suggestions on how learning could be further supported, strengthening home learning links. Families told us they really enjoyed the online posts and felt learning was shared consistently. Children were able to revisit learning from the floor books containing pictures, children's voice and examples of their work. We encouraged staff to strengthen evaluations within these to support children to recall learning and evidence progress.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Nurturing care and support

Staff demonstrated a strong commitment and understanding of nurturing relationships with children and families. Families strongly agreed they had good relationships with the staff team caring for their child. Comments included "I know my child is safe and I trust the staff", "all staff are very welcoming and nurturing towards my child" and "the environment and staff are great." As a result, families had developed positive, trusting relationships with the team.

Interactions were warm, responsive and respectful, promoting a sense of safety and security. Children were supported with personal care routines that respected their privacy and dignity. For example, staff discretely asked children if they were ready to use the bathroom. Engagement during these routines were calm, slow paced and fun, with lots of singing and laughter. Where it had been identified in plans, objects of reference and song signifiers were used to support a smooth transitions and children's understanding.

Transitions were well planned and managed at a pace tailored to children's needs. For example, additional visits into the setting and school facilities were arranged if required. All children and families had opportunities to attend stay-and-play sessions and links with the local school. Families told us staff were 'amazing' at supporting an enhanced transition for their child. As a result, the family build positive, trusting relationships with staff.

Mealtimes were calm, sociable and engaging for nearly all children, offering opportunities to develop life skills and independence. Staff sat with children, allowing time for connection, support and discussions. We encouraged the service to review the afternoon mealtime routine to ensure it reflects the high quality and engaging experience for all children.

Personal plans were in place for all children and had been consistently reviewed in line with best practice. When required, additional support plans were in place and evidenced the roles of all agencies to support additional and intensive interventions. Families told us the support offered to children "shines through". Staff knew children really well and confidently spoke about individual strategies being used. We encouraged them to record this level of detail in plans to ensure children's needs could be consistently met. For example, in the absence of the keyworker. Families were involved in reviewing progress and agreeing next steps in learning and development. They told us they were very happy with the quality of experiences provided.

The service promoted strong, positive relationships, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that was evident on entry. Parents and carers told us they felt welcomed and greeted by staff. They were kept informed through termly newsletters, daily conversations and online. Opportunities for engagement to promote learning through play were supported through stay and play sessions and family learning activities. Staff spoke confidently about the sessions they had shared with families and how these further strengthened connections and raised the importance of learning through play.

The team regularly consulted families through questionnaires and informal discussions. Feedback informed improvement planning for future sessions, for example offering stay and play at different times during the week, so more people could attend. The service also planned to further strengthen their connections to support positive relationships with keyworkers with enhanced transitions. Communication was described as very good by all families we spoke with. This demonstrated a commitment from the team to keep families informed, included and connected.

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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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