

# Buckstone Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

79 Buckstone Loan East  
Edinburgh  
EH10 6UY

Telephone: 01314 454 545

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 January 2026

**Service provided by:**  
City of Edinburgh Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002576

**Service no:**  
CS2003015835

## About the service

Buckstone Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children aged three years to entry into primary school.

The service is provided from Buckstone Primary School in Southwest Edinburgh. Children have access to a large open plan playroom, and free-flow access to an enclosed outdoor area. The children benefit from regular trips to the nearby woods and other amenities in the local area.

The service is situated close to public transport routes, shops and other local facilities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 January 2026 between the hours of 09:30 and 15:00. We returned on 21 January to complete the inspection between the hours of 09:15 and 15:30. 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, and five of their families
- reviewed feedback from seven families through online questionnaires
- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed documents

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure that children are safe, the physical environment is well-maintained, and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. 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 experienced warm, responsive care that supported their emotional wellbeing and development.
- Staff demonstrated genuine care and warmth, creating a welcoming and happy environment.
- Children were settled, engaged and enjoying meaningful play experiences tailored to their interests.
- The team provided high-quality learning opportunities indoors and outdoors, enabling children to explore and learn in varied environments.
- Children led their own play, while staff effectively extended their interests to promote independence and creativity.
- Distributed leadership within the team enhanced children's experiences.
- Some quality assurance activities needed strengthened, to ensure that robust systems were consistently in place.

## 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	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 4 - Good

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

### Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The vision and values of the service were firmly embedded in daily practice, and clearly reflected in children's experiences. For example, staff consistently modelled values-based practice, helping children feel safe, respected and included. The wider school and early years vision was under review, and will be co-designed in collaboration with children and families. This would ensure future developments continue to align with their rights, needs and interests.

Self-evaluation processes were purposeful and well-structured, supporting continuous improvement in the quality of care, play and learning. The service gathered families' views through consultations, questionnaires and daily informal interactions. To further strengthen engagement, plans were in place to introduce QR codes as a user-friendly method for collecting feedback. All parents who responded to our questionnaire agreed they were meaningfully involved in shaping the service. Comments included, "We feel our feedback/suggestions are taken on board" and "We are regularly asked to feedback our views."

The improvement plan demonstrated a clear commitment to ongoing development and positive outcomes. While aligned with the wider school improvement plan, it remained specific to the early years' context. Priority areas included communication and literacy, child participation and emotional literacy. We suggested the introduction of individual staff action plans with clear timescales and delegated responsibilities. This would enhance ownership of improvement activities.

Quality assurance and monitoring were undertaken regularly and shared across the leadership team. One area identified for development was improving the consistency of online learning journals, particularly in relation to next steps for learning. We also discussed and highlighted the importance of maintaining children's information within concise and well-organised personal plans, in line with the Care Inspectorate's guidance. Strengthening these processes would enhance consistency and ensure compliance with legislation and best practice.

Children benefited from a motivated and committed staff team who were focused on continuous improvement. The manager and staff fully engaged in the inspection process, and responded promptly to feedback. Staff reported feeling valued and supported through regular professional dialogue, ongoing training and team meetings. This positive culture contributed to a welcoming and nurturing environment for children, families and staff. Staff were also actively involved in self-evaluation using the new national framework and quality indicators linked to the improvement plan. This collaborative approach strengthened their understanding of high-quality practice and its impact on children's experiences, fostering a strong team ethos and positive working environment.

**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.

**Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing**

Children were actively engaged in experiences that reflected their interests, and included imaginative play, construction, arts and crafts and water play. Children told us they enjoyed outdoor play, water activities and "playing with dinosaurs." These experiences supported creativity, problem solving and social interaction.

A wide range of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities enabled children to lead their play and make informed choices. For example, many children showed a strong interest in birds, and staff effectively supported this by providing a bird watching area to extend their learning. Staff used skilful questioning to deepen thinking and promote curiosity. Parents commented positively on the breadth of experiences and the child-led approach. Comments included "The ELC do a fantastic job to offer such a range of learning and play opportunities. My child thrives in the child-led approach" and "Our child really enjoys nursery and loves the different play experiences on offer."

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests. Staff maintained a balance of planned and spontaneous learning, which was documented in 'floor books' alongside children's ideas and learning. This ensured learning targets were meaningful and motivating. Daily routines provided opportunities to develop early language, literacy and numeracy, supported by stories, songs and practical resources, such as number cards at snack time. Numeracy was embedded throughout the environment, with children engaging in counting activities and discussions about numbers.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of child development and supported individual needs sensitively, celebrating progress and fostering confidence. Staff interactions were positive and responsive, helping to extend learning. For example, some children were interested in flying and planes, staff supported them to explore their questions and fact finding, through the use of digital technology including an iPad. Children were able to build on their own ideas and deepen their learning.

Distributed leadership was well-established, with staff leading areas aligned to their strengths, including digital learning, literacy, health and wellbeing, creativity and outdoor learning. These contributions enhanced children's experiences and ensured access to appropriate sensory, schematic and more challenging activities. Families were involved through stay and play sessions, 'PEEP' groups and opportunities to share skills, strengthening shared learning. Consistent team planning and communication through newsletters and online updates helped extend learning beyond the setting.

Planning and assessment were informed by children's interests and developmental stages. Learning was tracked and reviewed regularly to ensure activities remained meaningful. Digital platforms allowed families to view learning and support home engagement. We asked the service to continue to review online learning journals. This would support the service in demonstrating clear lines of development, capturing the breadth, progression and depth of children's learning.

Children accessed the outdoors independently, freely moving between indoor and outdoor spaces. This allowed them opportunities that enhanced autonomy and supported physical wellbeing. Children enjoyed balancing, climbing and riding around a bike track. Staff provided appropriate supervision and encouragement, helping children to challenge themselves safely and develop physical skills, problem solving abilities and teamwork.

The bird watching activity was a particular focus, with digital technology used to record and review observations. This enriched children's understanding of nature and the world around them.

## 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.

### **Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support**

Children experienced warm, nurturing and responsive care that supported their emotional wellbeing and development. They were greeted warmly on arrival, and staff interactions were consistently calm, sensitive and reassuring. This demonstrated the team's strong commitment to building secure, trusting relationships with children and families. All parents agreed with the statement "Overall, I am happy with the care and support my child receives in this service" and one parent shared "I trust them fully, and they care deeply for each child."

Transitions were well-supported, with flexible arrangements in place to meet individual needs. Children new to the service were offered multiple settling visits to ensure they went at the child's pace. Transitions into primary one were a strength of the service, and children benefited from regular use of school spaces, such as the gym hall, dining room and mobile library. All families were invited to stay and play opportunities prior to starting, helping them build relationships with staff and feel familiar with the environment.

Children's emotional wellbeing was effectively supported through thoughtful planning and resources. They confidently used the 'emotions puppets', in a small quiet and cosy area of the setting. They were having fun, and demonstrated a range of facial expressions including happy, sad and angry, and told us "playing with my friends" made them happy. These opportunities build confidence and understanding of emotional wellbeing and self-regulation.

Mealtimes were a positive experience for children, offering valuable opportunities to promote independence and involvement. Children took part in routines such as setting the table, organising snack cards, clearing dishes and following effective handwashing procedures. Staff sat with children to model positive behaviours and support meaningful conversation. Food provided was nutritious, culturally appropriate and aligned with dietary guidance. Continuous access to fresh water enabled children to stay hydrated, promoting their overall health and wellbeing.

Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of children's health needs. Medical information was well-managed, with medication stored securely, recorded accurately and administered in line with policy and best practice. While all essential information was available, we discussed streamlining this to make it more easily accessible.

Staff knew children and families well, and this supported personalised approaches to meeting children's health, wellbeing and learning needs. Each child had a personal plan, completed in partnership with parents and regularly reviewed. Children's information was not always easily accessible and needed to be refined. We have reported on this further under 'Quality Assurance: Leadership and management of staff and resources.'

Where children needed additional support or challenge, they were very well-supported by staff who demonstrated a strong understanding of individual needs. The service had very good links with other professionals and agencies, ensuring timely and effective interventions. Additional wellbeing assessment plans were in place for children who required them, with specific, measurable targets that guided practice and supported progress. Staff made very good use of targeted strategies to meet children's needs, including approaches to promote communication, for example 'Up, up, and away', a resource tool to support and target literacy.

The service fostered strong, positive relationships and an inclusive, welcoming environment. Parents reported feeling informed and valued, with communication provided through newsletters, daily conversations and online updates. Family engagement opportunities, including stay and play sessions, cultural celebrations and family learning events strengthened connections, and highlighted the importance of play. This collaborative approach strengthened home links, and contributed to positive outcomes for children. As a result, children were confident to explore, form friendships and participate fully in learning.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>4 - Good</b>
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
<b>Children play and learn</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
<b>Children are supported to achieve</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.