

# St. Paul's Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

32 Templar Road  
East Calder  
EH53 0FU

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 March 2026

**Service provided by:**  
West Lothian Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002601

**Service no:**  
CS2003016160

## About the service

St. Paul's Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 66 children, aged from two years to not yet attending primary school. Of those 66, no more than 10 are aged from two to under three years.

At the time of the inspection 57 children were registered with the service.

The service is provided from a purpose-built setting within St. Paul's Primary School in East Calder, West Lothian. The service includes a large open plan playroom, cloakroom, kitchen, toilets and changing area. Children have access to a large, enclosed outdoor space.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on the 25 March 2026, between 9:30 and 17:00. 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
- reviewed feedback from 14 families using our digital questionnaire
- spoke with an additional six families
- spoke with staff and management
- 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, no improvements were identified in relation to core assurances.

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

- Effective quality assurance and approaches to self-evaluation supported continuous improvement and improved the quality of children's experiences.
- Children were deeply engaged and independent in a well-designed environment that supported exploration and creativity and sustained meaningful play.
- Staff's enthusiastic and warm approach created a joyful atmosphere where children felt relaxed, confident and connected, helping to build strong and positive relationships.
- Staff's strong understanding of how children learn supported meaningful, child-led experiences. Children's ideas and interests were respected, allowing them to influence their play.
- Personal plans were detailed, strengths-based and regularly reviewed. This ensured each child received consistent, personalised support that reflected their individual needs, interests and wellbeing.
- Warm, trusting relationships with families and strong communication helped families feel welcomed, valued and connected to their child's experiences. This strengthened partnership working and continuity of care.

## 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

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

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.

The service promoted a clear and purposeful vision, values and aims that everyone in the nursery understood and supported. This ensured that they remained relevant, child-centred and reflective of the nursery community's needs. The values were evident in daily practice, with staff helping children understand them through conversations and song. Working closely with families meant the vision, values and aims genuinely shaped the setting's work and contributed to positive outcomes for children.

Quality assurance processes were embedded across the service, supporting strong and effective leadership. Auditing and monitoring were used purposefully, including regular evaluations of children's experiences and ongoing reviews of procedures. A wide range of evidence helped the team to reflect on practice, recognise strengths and identify areas for development. This supported continuous, evidence-based improvement, ensuring children experienced consistently high quality provision.

The team worked collaboratively to reflect on practice and strengthen the overall quality of experiences. Staff met regularly for professional discussions, creating opportunities to share successes, learn from one another and build collective expertise. Self-evaluation activities were carried out as a team using the Quality Improvement Framework for the Early learning and Childcare Sector to assess current practice, review progress and create clear action plans. This helped to identify strengths and areas for further development and contributed to improving outcomes for children and families.

Developments were introduced at an appropriate pace and communicated clearly across the team, enabling a shared leadership approach. Staff spoke confidently about their role in improvement work and their leadership responsibilities through champion roles. They felt supported and valued, with leaders creating conditions that empowered staff. This promoted a shared responsibility for implementing change.

Children's and families' voices were highly valued and contributed meaningfully to improvement. This created a shared understanding of what was working well and where changes were needed. Views were actively sought and listened to, ensuring decision making was responsive and shaped by the people who use the service. This inclusive approach strengthened improvements and reflected the priorities and lived experiences of children and families.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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.

Children were highly engaged in their play, within a well-designed environment that encouraged independence, exploration and high quality learning. Open ended and real life materials supported imagination, creativity and problem solving. Children had strong ownership of their learning, leading their play with confidence and enjoying meaningful experiences. They built on their ideas by moving resources around the setting, helping them make connections in their learning. 'Do Not Disturb' cards allowed children to save their work and return to it later. This supported continuity and encouraged them to revisit and extend their play over time.

Staff created a joyful and engaging atmosphere through their animated and enthusiastic approach. Children were relaxed and confident around staff, exploring play experiences together. It was clear that staff and children enjoyed spending time with each other. This helped to build strong relationships and created a positive ethos.

Children had meaningful opportunities to develop their literacy, language and numeracy skills. Numeracy was part of everyday play through activities including counting, recognising numbers, sorting and making patterns. Literacy was supported through signs, stories and a range of mark-making materials. Staff introduced new words during conversations, helping children build language naturally. Songs and rhymes offered fun, interactive ways for children to strengthen their skills in early literacy and numeracy.

Children enjoyed rich outdoor learning that encouraged curiosity, investigation and links within the community. They moved easily between indoors and outdoors, choosing activities that interested them. Forest school sessions gave children hands on experiences in nature, helping them explore and build resilience. Their enthusiasm for planting was supported through a trip to the garden centre, where they chose seeds to grow and care for. Experiences helped children to develop responsibility and an understanding of the natural world, while also strengthening connections between nursery, home and the local community.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of how children play and learn. Experiences were planned in response to children's needs. In the moment planning approaches were embedded and enabled staff to respond to children's ideas and interests. Children's influence in planning their experiences was a real strength of the service. This helped children to feel heard, involved and motivated in their learning.

The use of floor books further strengthened this responsive approach. These included children's drawings, artwork, comments and reflections, helping them review their experiences and plan their next steps. Children had real ownership of this process and proudly described themselves as the "authors" of the books, showing their active role in shaping their learning.

Staff monitored children's progress well to make sure they received the right level of support and challenge. 'Star moments' supported children to recognise their successes and feel proud of what they had achieved. Children were making good progress and experienced well matched levels of challenge that supported their ongoing development and learning.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

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.

Children experienced warm, nurturing care and strong emotional support. Staff used gentle, caring and reassuring interactions that helped children feel safe and secure. Positive attachments were clear, with children confidently approaching staff to share their needs or seek comfort. Sensitive responses, such as cuddles, soft tones and reassuring touch, helped to create a calm and trusting atmosphere. As a result, children felt valued and emotionally supported, which strengthened their wellbeing.

Transitions and daily routines were centred around children's needs. Visual prompts, songs and gentle reminders helped prepare children for changes and created a reassuring sense of predictability. Children were given time to process change, allowing them to move to new experiences at their own pace. Staff provided a flexible approach throughout routines, adapting their support to reflect the needs and emotional readiness of each child. This allowed children to navigate transitions calmly and confidently, developing a sense of security.

Children were supported to develop an understanding of their rights. Staff used language that encouraged choice and respect, helping children recognise their rights in everyday situations. Calm, safe spaces allowed them to express feelings and regulate their emotions. Regular check-ins from adults showed emotional availability and helped children feel secure. This nurturing, rights based approach supported children to feel safe, valued and respected.

Children experienced positive and nurturing mealtimes that supported their independence. Free flow snack times allowed them to choose when they were ready to eat, reducing interruptions to play. Children developed self help skills by serving themselves, clearing dishes and washing up. Staff sat with children, creating a warm and social atmosphere. Children's choices were respected. For example, when a child was not ready to eat, staff acknowledged this and allowed them to return when they felt ready. This calm and supportive environment strengthened relationships and made mealtimes enjoyable.

Personal plans recognised children as individuals and supported their wellbeing. Plans included detailed information about children's preferences, interests and needs, helping staff to plan care. Strategies focused on children's strengths and highlighted where they would benefit from support. Regular reviews kept plans responsive and child-centred. Working with families and other professionals strengthened plans further. This ensured children received consistent, personalised support and their individual needs were well understood.

Positive and trusting relationships with families were well established. Staff welcomed families warmly and took time to share children's experiences. Homely touches, such as family photos and soft music, created a comfortable atmosphere where families felt valued. Opportunities to discuss children's progress and ongoing learning updates ensured families felt included and involved. Families highlighted strong relationships and good communication as key strengths. One shared, "Always open to feedback and friendly, they keep everyone updated and I never feel like I'm not in the 'know'. My child absolutely loves them". Another commented, "Staff at St. Paul's are all so approachable and want the best for our children". Effective partnership working supported continuity of care and helped families feel connected to their child's experiences.

## 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>5 - Very Good</b>
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very 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

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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

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

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