

Granton Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

19 Wardieburn Street West
Edinburgh
EH5 1EB

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 February 2026

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003017028

About the service

Granton Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 110 children aged between two years and primary school entry at any one time. No more than 30 are aged two years to under three years.

The nursery is located in a detached building within the grounds of Granton primary school in the north of Edinburgh. It is close to local shops, parks and travel links. The premises consists of four playrooms, all with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 February 2026, between 09:15 and 16:15 and 26 February between 08:30 and 15:30. 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:

- observed children using the service
- received online feedback from nine families
- spoke with the staff and management team
- 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 relating to core assurances.

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 service.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing and responsive care that supported their wellbeing.
- Staff knew children and families well, and strived to create a warm and welcoming environment.
- Children had fun and were engaged in planned and spontaneous experiences, that were responsive to their interests.
- Children were able to play and learn at their own pace, having fun as they explored both indoors and outdoors.
- Families were invited to share in their child's learning journey, and they were welcomed into the setting at drop off and pick up times.
- The service should further develop its approach to child protection, including ensuring robust procedures are consistently applied to respond to concerns.

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	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - 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

Leaders and staff shared a clear understanding of the service's vision and demonstrated a strong commitment to working collaboratively with children and families. Staff modelled values-based practice, showing warmth, kindness and attentive listening in their interactions with children. This helped children feel secure, respected and included. The environment reflected the setting's ethos, remaining inviting, well cared for and thoughtfully reset throughout the day. The wider school and nursery were currently reviewing their vision and values with staff, children and families, to ensure they reflect the nursery's unique identity. Although at an early stage, diversity and inclusion have already been identified as key priorities.

Parents described the nursery as warm and nurturing, noting that children felt secure and valued. One parent commented that, "Clear communication from staff keeps us informed and reassured."

Leaders have created conditions where staff feel valued and confident to contribute ideas and lead change. This collaborative approach had built a strong sense of shared responsibility and helped develop leadership across the team. For example, this was supported by staff in champion roles of digital technology and numeracy. Regular staff meetings encouraged reflection, consistency and collective ownership of high standards. Staff described the leadership team as approachable and visible, although, pressures linked to staff absence have at times, created challenges. Despite this, the team remained positive and motivated, demonstrating ongoing commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children and families.

Staff were engaged in self-evaluation using best practice guidance, and had recently begun using the 'Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare Sectors (Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland 2025)' to support and understand how well the setting is meeting expectations. The views of children and families were valued, and the setting used a range of approaches to gather feedback. Recognising that formal methods such as questionnaires often receive limited responses, staff made effective use of informal feedback during stay-and-play sessions, parent consultations and community-led projects.

Quality assurance systems supported continuous improvement and strengthened outcomes for children. Monitoring processes helped ensure key aspects of the service were regularly reviewed, and actions were taken to improve practice. The quality assurance calendar clearly outlined tasks and timescales, helping staff track improvements over time. Risk assessments were in place to identify potential hazards indoors and outdoors, contributing to a safe environment. However, some ongoing challenges were noted within the outdoor environment meaning some areas remained closed, and one section still presented a possible trip hazard due to exposed metal edging. These restrictions limited children's access and exploration opportunities and had an impact on staff morale, as the team were keen to progress outdoor developments.

There were some areas where practice around safeguarding notifications could be strengthened. For example, a notification to the Care Inspectorate was not submitted, and an incident was not referred to the lead agency as required.

These gaps reflected an opportunity to ensure that processes fully met with expectations around safeguarding, consistent communication and effective leadership oversight. (See area for improvement 1).

Staff reported feeling well supported and effectively mentored throughout their induction. They demonstrated a strong commitment to delivering high-quality care, play and learning. The leadership team recognised the importance of maintaining a stable and skilled workforce, to support the wellbeing of both children and staff. The current team showed a clear commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children.

Areas for improvement

1. To support the safety and wellbeing of children using the service, the provider should ensure that child protection policies and procedures are consistently followed. This includes building a clear and accurate understanding of events, by recording relevant information effectively, sharing this with appropriate agencies and supporting all staff, to maintain a strong understanding of their responsibilities.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state: "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed." (HSCS 4.23).

Children play and learn 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: Play, learning and developing

Overall children were happy, confident and purposeful in their play. They were engaged and motivated with the range and quality of indoor and outdoor experiences, enabling them to lead their own learning effectively. The level of choice available supported children's independence and decision making. Parents responded positively to the range of experiences children engaged in and included, "My child is encouraged to choose from a range of activities and experiences, allowing them to explore their interests and develop new skills at their own pace" and, "Staff provide guidance and support while allowing independence."

Staff interactions were warm, responsive and attuned to children's communication and emotional needs. Their understanding of individual children enabled sensitive adjustments to language and expectations, helping to build children's confidence. We discussed it would be helpful to extend already established communication approaches such as visuals, object signifiers, transition objects, timers or visual schedules. This could further support and benefit some children's understanding of routines.

Strong examples of sustained shared thinking were observed, particularly in storytelling and construction play. Staff used open-ended questions to promote reasoning and problem solving, such as encouraging children to consider shape and stability during building. Children engaged in high-quality imaginative play. They negotiated roles confidently and used creative language to build shared scenarios, supporting communication, early literacy and cooperation. The well attended song session provided further opportunities for listening, turn taking and expressive movement.

Although the outdoor area had some limitations, it was organised thoughtfully. Children had opportunities to climb, ride bikes, engage in imaginative play, explore early numeracy through resources like 'Numicon' and work with small world and construction materials. These activities supported physical development and creativity. The outdoor water area was a particular strength, offering rich opportunities for exploration and sustained engagement. For example, one child explored water flow for an extended period, narrating their actions and demonstrating curiosity and early problem-solving skills.

Children were beginning to explore early data handling experiences within the environment, and building on this could gently enhance their understanding of information and comparison in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Digital learning opportunities could also be enriched through the introduction of tools such as cameras, stopwatches, Bee Bots, and simple tinkering activities, supporting children's curiosity and engagement.

Staff demonstrated a solid understanding of both intentional and responsive planning. They should continue to strengthen how the impact of planned and spontaneous experiences is evidenced. At times, experiences were marked as complete without clearly showing what children had learned. Strengthening the connection between observations and planned learning intentions will improve understanding of children's progress. This will support effective planning for next steps, ensuring progress is sustained over time. 'Floor books' described children's experiences and interests well, however, they should also include an evaluation of the skills developed, or significant learning achieved, and how this contributed to progress over time.

Some parents shared that they would welcome an increased frequency of observations and feedback provided through the online learning journal. This would help them feel more informed about their child's day and development.

Children are supported to achieve 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: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing care that supported their emotional wellbeing. Staff were consistently kind and gentle in their interactions, helping children feel safe, secure and confident. Calm and responsive approaches encouraged most children to express their feelings and begin developing early self-regulation skills. The consistent use of 'sign along' throughout the service further supported non-verbal children, and those with English as an additional language.

Transitions into the service were thoughtfully planned. Flexible arrangements, including multiple settling visits and stay and play opportunities helped families feel reassured and supported early relationship building. While some children's plans for transitions across the day included strategies, such as 'now and next' visuals, these were not always seen in practice. Ensuring these supports were used consistently would strengthen children's sense of predictability and enhance their developing self-regulation.

Personal planning systems were generally effective, supported by clearly defined strategies. However, some plans required more regular updates to ensure they reflect all essential information, such as including emotional support needs and ensuring listed strategies are fully embedded in practice. Strengthening and maintaining these plans will enable staff to provide consistent, needs-led support. Staff collaborated well with external professionals, and this multi-agency approach contributed to coordinated support for children and families. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of children's health needs. Medical information was well managed, with medication stored securely, and administered in line with policy and best practice. Although essential information was available, the service should develop clearer escalation procedures, for example, outlining the steps to take if medication was ineffective.

Mealtimes were positive, encouraging independence and social interaction. Children were supported to self-serve, pour drinks and clear their dishes. Although routine responsibilities, such as table setting, were already in place, experiences could be enriched further by ensuring these are consistently offered across all rooms in the setting. Staff were mindful of allergies and dietary requirements, and first serving options were used to support regulation for some children. During the inspection, a small number of children still felt hungry after lunch. Staff explained that there were arrangements in place to offer additional servings, or suitable alternatives when children needed them. We discussed there remains scope to further strengthen practice so that children are consistently supported to feel full, comfortable, and well cared for at mealtimes.

The service demonstrated a clear commitment to promoting children's health and wellbeing. Through its participation in the Nourishing Nurseries pilot programme, the service has promoted exposure to a wider range of foods for children and shared resources, including vegetables and recipes, to support learning and continuity at home.

Positive relationships with families were clearly evident. Staff responded sensitively to individual circumstances and offered a range of informal and formal communication opportunities. Continuing to reduce barriers through stay and play sessions, community initiatives and parent consultations will help further strengthen family engagement.

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

Staff should continually review the everyday routine and systems, to ensure best outcomes for children and parents.

National care standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16, standard 11: access to resources and standard 13: improving the service.

This area for improvement was made on 23 November 2017.

Action taken since then

Staff had reviewed existing routines and systems in place. These included parents being invited into the nursery rooms at drop off and pick up each day, children having free flow access to the outdoors daily and more accurate record keeping for accidents and incidents.

This area for improvement has 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

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

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