

# Canal View Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 March 2026

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

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002576

**Service no:**  
CS2007155611

## About the service

Canal View Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to 64 children at any one time aged between 3 years and primary school entry.

The service is provided from a separate building within the grounds of Canal View Primary School in the South West of Edinburgh and offers funded childcare to eligible children. The nursery accommodation includes an entrance foyer with a parents' room and visitor toilet facilities, a cloakroom for children's belongings, an office space and two large playrooms. The playrooms link together to enable children to move freely between the two spaces.

Toilet and nappy changing facilities were located in the area between the two playrooms. Children benefit from direct access to a large outdoor play area and an adjacent enclosed woodland area. The woodland area was closed during inspection.

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

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 March 2026 between the hours of 08:55 and 16:30. We returned to complete the inspection on 17 March 2026 between the hours of 08:50 and 16:30. 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:

- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed feedback from eight families using an online form
- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and development, and the management of the service.

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 the quality indicators, Leadership and management of staff and resources and Children play and learn.

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

- A shared vision and purpose meant that children benefitted from predominantly warm, nurturing relationships and a strong community ethos, helping them feel safe, valued and included.
- To maximise the impact of self-evaluation and quality assurance processes, the service should ensure that reflections and regular audits are followed through with actions that lead to improvement.
- Children experienced engaging play opportunities across the setting. The service should now ensure that all areas and routines consistently support high-quality learning.
- Children experienced predominantly warm, nurturing interactions, where staff responded sensitively to their emotional needs, helping them feel safe and valued.
- The service should ensure transitions and daily routines consistently support children's comfort, independence and emotional security.

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

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.

Children experienced positive outcomes overall because the service had a warm, relational ethos that helped them feel safe, nurtured and included. The recent refresh of the vision and values, co-designed with children, families and staff, strongly reflected the whole community and supported a shared sense of purpose. Staff consistently described a "real community feel" and demonstrated pride in being part of a close-knit team. Families confirmed this value base, with one telling us, "My child has a very close bond with most of the teachers," and another stating, "I know the staff love and care for the children."

Families were invited to participate in cultural celebrations and events, which strengthened connections between home and nursery. One family said, "I really enjoy being in the environment and seeing what my child enjoys doing." At present, families were not routinely invited into the setting, and one family told us they would prefer it, "if we didn't need to stand in the line and wait to pick up the children at the end of the day." This highlighted an opportunity to further enhance family experiences and strengthen inclusion. We signposted the service to, 'Me, my family and my childcare setting' (Care Inspectorate, 2025) to support reflection and next steps.

Leaders demonstrated good reflective capacity and willingness to improve, which contributed to emerging improvements for children. They had begun supporting staff to engage with the new quality framework (Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors, Care Inspectorate and HMIE, 2025) creating a positive foundation for reflective thinking. Staff took on individual leadership roles, which strengthened distributed leadership and collective ownership of improvement. Early self-evaluation and quality assurance activities had begun to lead to better outcomes, particularly outdoors, where the environment was regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure high-quality play, development and learning experiences.

Targeted checks on language and communication were emerging within self-evaluation, and this was beginning to guide next steps in planning for some children. To further strengthen children's experiences, staff had also reflected on routines such as group times and mealtimes and had begun to monitor their own observations and interactions in a more systematic way. To ensure that self-evaluation leads to demonstrable improvements in children's experiences, identified issues should be translated reliably into clear actions, and be evaluated for impact. Similarly, to ensure consistently safe and high-quality outcomes for children, quality assurance processes required strengthening, for example, in the auditing of medication, accidents and incidents, more robust infection prevention and control procedures and elements of personal plans. The service also needed to develop confidence in recognising their regulatory responsibilities regarding notifications to the Care Inspectorate. To support this, we signposted them to, 'Records that all registered care services (except childminding) must keep and guidance on notification reporting' (Care Inspectorate, 2012) (see area for improvement 1).

Staff development processes contributed to a supportive and motivated team. Induction, annual appraisals and professional development and review processes were helping staff understand expectations and their roles within improvement. We also signposted the service to the 'Early learning and childcare: national

induction resource' (Scottish Government, 2023) to support further reflection and strengthen consistency across the whole team moving forwards.

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure consistent high-quality outcomes in children's care, support and learning, the provider should ensure that review processes are regularly carried out and that self-evaluation systems identify issues and lead to measurable improvements.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- ensuring regular auditing and reviewing of medication, accidents and incidents, infection prevention and control measures, and personal plans
- developing self-evaluation approaches that identify clear next steps and measure impact
- ensuring appropriate notifications are submitted to the Care Inspectorate.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11); and

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

## Children play and learn 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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.

Most children experienced positive learning outcomes because they had opportunities to make choices, follow their interests and engage in meaningful, sustained play. Children moved confidently across the environment and, for the most part, staff provided the time, space and support needed for learning to deepen. The outdoor environment, in particular, offered rich, challenging and joyful experiences. During the inspection we observed extended periods of engagement where children demonstrated problem solving, collaboration, creativity and confidence. Families echoed this impact, commenting: "The nursery has a fantastic garden" and "My child spends most of their time outside."

Children were developing important life skills in understanding risk and keeping themselves safe. Floorbooks showed that children were able to articulate their thinking about risk, manage tools safely and share resources. Adjustments made to the layout during this learning demonstrated that staff were reflective and responsive to children's needs. Continuing to embed this approach consistently would further strengthen children's independence, confidence and safety awareness.

To ensure that the outdoor environment continues to offer children both exciting challenge and consistent

safety, the service should continue to reflect on how the space is organised and supervised. During the inspection, there were times when staff were managing large groups outdoors, which made it more difficult to maintain the high-quality interactions and proactive approaches to risk that the team aspired to. Some features of the environment, such as blind spots and the positioning of sheds and crates, reduced visibility and limited staff's ability to support children's exploration as effectively as they would wish. Incorporating simple daily risk assessments, including child participation, would further enhance children's ownership, responsibility and confidence as they learn to manage risk within safe boundaries (see area for Improvement 1).

Most children benefitted from a broad range of indoor learning experiences that supported early literacy, numeracy, digital skills and social development. Children used the smart board to explore number concepts, took turns on iPads and engaged confidently with digital tools that promoted curiosity, cooperation and problem solving. The construction area was particularly effective, offering well attended, stimulating spaces where children engaged deeply in building, designing and experimenting, supported by responsive staff interactions.

To further enhance children's learning indoors, the service should now reflect on how consistently enabling all learning spaces are. Certain areas were cluttered, tired or were not replenished regularly enough to sustain meaningful play. Some areas were not used at all by children due to limited resources available to provoke imagination or support developing skills. Similarly, although the tool bench attracted interest, it lacked authentic materials that would allow children to explore ideas, and take pride in creating their own products. Strengthening these spaces with high-quality, inviting and authentic materials would further promote language, creativity and sustained engagement. Using an audit tool may support the team to evaluate these areas more systematically and ensure consistency in the quality of play experiences across the rooms (see area for improvement 2).

Staff interactions on the whole supported children's emotional security, communication and critical thinking. We observed some attuned, calm and enquiring practice, where children were deeply absorbed and supported to explore ideas and relationships. For example, small groups where children naturally came together for stories, promoted children's understanding of turn taking, friendships and emotional awareness through reflective prompts from staff. Early mathematical language was modelled naturally at these times and children drew creative links from stories. On a few occasions, some interactions became more directive and did not always build on children's ideas or provide the emotional reassurance that helped them feel confident to explore. These moments did not reflect the strong, child-centred practice seen elsewhere in the setting. Work already started on peer and leader observations should help to enhance this practice. Providing targeted coaching and modelling would help ensure that all staff apply consistent approaches that promote children's curiosity, confidence and sense of security.

The service was benefitting from a clear and focused approach to supporting emerging literacy. This involved the use of engaging activities to help children build early communication skills through the re-introducing of well-loved rhymes, involving families through Bookbug sessions and using a straightforward way of tracking children's progress. These approaches helped ensure children were learning and progressing in enjoyable and meaningful ways.

Planning was systematic and floorbooks demonstrated breadth across the curriculum. Experiences were well documented and reflected early progress in embedding UNCRC informed practice (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990). While staff were beginning to look at evaluating practice, several were descriptive rather than evaluative. This made it more difficult to identify how experiences contributed to children's learning or what needed to come next. Staff had recognised this and were already beginning to refine their approach.

Learning journals showed clear examples of children making meaningful progress. These included children gaining confidence in sharing space with others, beginning to use signs to communicate, developing physical skills and exploring simple early science ideas through their play. These examples reflected thoughtful observations that captured important moments in children's development. To ensure these opportunities can track progress over time, as well as involve families more fully in their child's learning, staff should continue to ensure all children are consistently tracked regularly. Other approaches being used to track targeted areas, including simple rhyme-based assessments, offered a promising model to support more consistent practice across the team. Families had noticed positive changes in development and learning, commenting that, "My child has come on leaps and bounds" and "We notice the development and learning happening every day."

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children continue to experience a safe, stimulating and challenging outdoor learning environment, the provider should review and strengthen outdoor supervision arrangements and the organisation of the outdoor space.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19); and

'People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me' (HSCS 3.16).

2. To ensure all children consistently experience rich and engaging indoor play and learning, the provider should review and enhance the quality, organisation and presentation of the indoor environment. This should include ensuring areas are refreshed during the day and using an audit approach to evaluate and improve indoor environments on an ongoing basis. This would further enhance opportunities for creativity, language development, problem-solving and sustained engagement in play.

This is to ensure 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 are supported to achieve **4 - Good**

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

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.

Most children experienced warm, nurturing care that supported their emotional wellbeing and sense of security. Staff were observed using gentle touch, calm voices, humour and patient reassurance to help children feel safe and settled. Children were comfortable approaching adults for reassurance and received calm, sensitive responses that helped them feel secure. Individualised care for children who needed additional help was a strength. For example, some children were supported through a range of additional

strategies to help them feel at ease, as well as, valued and understood. These included safe spaces, personalised resource boxes, and some sensory input. These were used consistently alongside warm, responsive interactions that brought visible comfort and joy. These examples reflected a team who knew children well and prioritised emotional safety.

Bigger transitions across the day would benefit from further reflection to ensure they support all children effectively. At times, routines became too adult-led, and staff did not always use co-created strategies that promoted children's autonomy and emotional security. These moments were out of step with more relational practice seen elsewhere and meant some children did not receive the reassurance, choice or gentle guidance they needed at these points. For example, large gather times and lunchtime did not yet provide calm and supportive experiences for all children. While the service had been trialling different approaches, specifically at lunchtime, routines were still busy, with high noise levels and fewer opportunities for staff to sit with children and build meaningful connections. The layout at the time also made it harder for staff to supervise children comfortably, leading to more reactive responses and fewer opportunities for calm, natural social connection. Closing popular play areas during lunch also reduced children's options for interest led play and learning.

In contrast, snack time was calmer, more sociable and child-centred, because the routine was paced and structured better to meet children's needs. To build on this, the service could explore smaller lunch groups to allow staff to consistently sit with children and gather children's views on what helps them feel comfortable at mealtimes. These changes may support calmer routines, strengthen relationships and help to keep children safe. They would also enhance opportunities for positive learning during these important social moments, while ensuring children can continue to make choices about where they want to play. To promote children's sense of safety and understanding of what comes next, staff should reflect on the purpose of these big groups and consider consistent inclusive strategies. For example, clear visual cues or sensory supports as well as smaller group sizes. The smaller, more natural gather times that occurred during the day provided a helpful model to support this (see area for improvement 1).

Family engagement was thoughtful and clearly valued by families. The Eid celebration was a particular success, fostering belonging and pride within the community. Flexible Bookbug sessions allowed families to attend together where possible, while also ensuring some children whose families could not attend remained included at other times in the week. These approaches reflected genuine respect for children's interests, identities and home cultures. Parents told us, "My child is happy and enjoys themselves. They adore the staff and have learnt so much."

Staff knew individual children well and were beginning to develop a wider range of supports to meet their needs. Some children had access to cloakroom spaces or, at times, the parent room for quieter experiences. The service could consider the general layout to incorporate quieter, sensory-friendly spaces to support children more widely who benefit from reduced stimulation or calming sensory input.

Personal plans contained helpful strategies to support children; however, the service should now ensure all plans are dated, reviewed and evaluated for impact. This would help ensure that strategies intended to put children at ease are current and consistently applied and that they are used as a live document to support children's wellbeing (see area for improvement 1 within Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources).

Good handwashing routines were in place which helped to keep children safe from infection. To strengthen this further, staff should ensure all areas are checked thoroughly to reduce the spread of infection. Any old resources or ripped fabrics on chairs or cushions should be replaced, and kitchen areas should be

uncluttered (see area for improvement 1 within Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources).

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all children experience calm, predictable and supportive transitions throughout the day, the provider should document, review and strengthen routines such as mealtimes, gather times, toothbrushing and the end-of-day experience.

This would help to promote transitions that are paced and organised in ways that are supportive to all children and reduce waiting, noise and crowding.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'If I experience care and support in a group, the overall size and composition of that group is right for me' (HSCS 1.8); 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](http://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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