

Newcraighall Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Whitehill Street
Newcraighall
Musselburgh
EH21 8QZ

Telephone: 01316 693 598

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 March 2026

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003015862

About the service

Newcraighall primary school nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children at any one time, aged between three years and primary school entry.

The nursery is located within Newcraighall primary school in Musselburgh, and has one playroom with free-flow access to a large outdoor area. It is close to transport links, shops and local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 and 10 March 2026 between 09:15 and 15:15. 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
- gathered feedback from eight families through an online questionnaire
- 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 relating 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

- 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.
- The service demonstrated a strong commitment to improvement and positive change.
- Children's health benefited from daily access to the outdoors.
- Quality assurance processes could be strengthened further to improve outcomes for children.

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

The vision, values and aims of the service were clearly aligned with those of the wider school, and promoted a strong emphasis on partnership with parents, carers and the local community. These were clearly reflected in the nurturing environment and the respectful interactions observed between staff, children and families. However, these had not been reviewed for some time. The newly appointed head teacher recognised the need to refresh them, to better reflect the school and nursery's unique identity, through meaningful consultation with staff, children and families. This would support shared priorities and a collective commitment to positive outcomes.

Staff shared feeling supported by the management team, and welcomed increased opportunities to contribute to decision-making and engage more fully with the wider school community. Leadership roles were used effectively to empower staff and promote ownership of developments. Staff spoke positively about leading initiatives, such as 'Woodland Wednesdays' and 'PEEP' (Peep learning together programme), which supported learning tailored to children's needs and interests. The PEEP programme was also used effectively to support transitions for new children and families and to strengthen relationships.

Staff engaged in self-evaluation using best practice guidance, including the 'Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare Sectors' (Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland 2025). Children's and families' views were valued, with strong examples of children's voices and effective use of feedback, through stay and play sessions and parent consultations. The improvement plan identified key priorities, including collaborative working across the nursery and school, literacy and numeracy, children's rights and equity and inclusion. However, staff had limited involvement in setting these priorities. A more consultative approach, supported by clear action plans with timescales and allocated responsibilities, would strengthen ownership and sustain improvement. Weekly meetings, a quality assurance calendar and regular professional dialogue supported reflection and change. To further strengthen quality assurance, leaders should ensure planned observations are undertaken consistently and that all staff receive timely, constructive feedback within a clear cycle of observation, reflection and follow up.

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. Parents told us, "The staff are all extremely nurturing and invested in making the children's experiences the best they can be."

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: Playing, learning and developing

Children had fun and participated in a wide range of play experiences which stimulated their natural curiosity, learning and creativity. Most children sustained engagement for extended periods, which contributed positively to their confidence, wellbeing and overall involvement. For example, children demonstrated enjoyment and creativity during block play and art activities.

Staff supported children to learn at their own pace within a positive and nurturing environment. Effective questioning was used to extend individual learning and staff listened attentively to children's ideas, promoting turn-taking and cooperative play. While practice was generally strong, there were occasional missed opportunities to further deepen learning. Continued development of questioning techniques would support more consistent extension of children's thinking.

Planning reflected a balance of intentional and responsive approaches, with experiences informed by children's interests and emerging ideas. 'Floor books' were used effectively to capture learning, enabling children to recall and discuss experiences. For example, a recent learning focus had been the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, and children could recall learning and share with us, "Jack's mum threw the beans out the window and Jack climbed high where the giant lives."

Learning journals shared children's experiences with families. While some observations showed clear progression, overall quality and consistency varied. Next steps were not always sufficiently focused on significant learning or clear progression. Improving the quality and frequency of observations would strengthen assessment and ensure learning remains appropriately challenging. Parents expressed positive views of the journals and welcomed more regular updates.

Children developed early literacy and numeracy skills through mark making, music, stories and environmental print. Staff supported communication and language development through singing and shared reading, using clear and purposeful language to build vocabulary and confidence.

The playroom was well-organised and resourced, with a range of provocations that promoted exploration and engagement. The environment was thoughtfully planned to support creativity, however, some group routines would benefit from review to ensure children's choices remain central to practice.

The outdoor environment included a mud kitchen, climbing equipment, bikes, balls and construction areas. These effectively supported physical development and imaginative play. Children developed climbing and balancing skills with appropriate staff encouragement, promoting safe risk-taking.

Strong community links further enriched children's experiences, and supported a sense of belonging through regular visits to local amenities, including woodland areas. Parents shared, "Regular trips to the country park are great" and "(Child) loves woodland Wednesday and Newhailes."

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, responsive care that supported their emotional wellbeing and development. Staff consistently offered praise, reassurance and physical comfort when needed, helping children feel settled and secure. Feedback from parents was positive, highlighting the strong relationships they and their children had with staff. Comments included, "All the staff are amazing and always make time for parents" and "The staff are warm and approachable and really lovely with the kids, this means I'm comfortable leaving my child in their care."

Transitions were planned carefully and centred on individual children's needs. Staff worked collaboratively with families to tailor support, helping children feel safe and confident during times of change, including starting the service and transitioning to primary school. Stay and play sessions were offered prior to children starting, supporting relationship building and familiarity with the setting. We asked staff to be mindful of transitions throughout the day, such as during group times, to ensure children remained engaged and supported through meaningful experiences.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the use of personal plans, developed in partnership with families and reviewed regularly. These plans contained relevant information about children's interests, health and wellbeing. While staff could clearly describe strategies used to support individual children, these were not always consistently recorded. Improving documentation would support continuity of care and enable clearer monitoring of progress.

Infection prevention and control arrangements were effective, with risk assessments in place for indoor and outdoor areas. Children were actively involved in promoting safe practices, such as handwashing. Visibility to toilet areas was restricted, and staff were advised to continue regular monitoring.

Nappy changing facilities were available, however, the service should review and update its policy, to ensure arrangements are clearly communicated to parents and reflect inclusive practice.

Mealtimes provided opportunities to promote children's independence and involvement. Children were supported to self-serve and pour their own drinks, helping to build confidence. Staff sat with children, supporting positive relationships, however, this was not always consistent, as staff were also serving in the kitchen area and this impacted on supervision. We suggested reviewing mealtime organisation to reduce staff movement, allowing for more meaningful interactions, improved supervision and safer eating.

Strong connections with families enhanced engagement and contributed positively to children's experiences. The setting provided a warm and welcoming environment where families felt valued and supported. Opportunities, such as stay and play sessions and bedtime book events were well-attended and positively received. Parents spoke highly of communication with staff, and valued time spent in the setting with their children. We encouraged the service to review drop off and collection procedures, as welcoming families into the playroom can further strengthen relationships and partnerships.

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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