Hilltop Primary School Nursery Class and Language and Communication Support Centre (LCSC) NC
Day Care of Children

Petersburn Road
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Telephone: 01236 632 240

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 June 2026

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015339

About the service

Hilltop Primary School Nursery Class and Language and Communication Support Centre (LCSC) NC is a daycare service operated by North Lanarkshire Council. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 48 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school as follows: nursery class a maximum of 40 children and pre-assessment unit a maximum of 8 children.

The nursery is part of Hilltop Primary School and consists of two playrooms. Toileting and nappy changing facilities can be accessed within each of the playrooms. The enclosed outdoor area is shared with the Nursery and LCSC and provides children with access to outdoor play and learning opportunities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 03 and 04 June 2026 between 08:30 - 16:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 04 June 2026. 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, complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with 38 children using the service
- received six completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with three families using the service
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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.

Key messages

- Staff interactions were responsive and meaningful, helping children feel valued, listened to and included.
- Personal plans were in place and developed with families; however, reviews and updates were not always consistent, limiting how effectively they reflected current needs.
- Most children were happy, engaged and confident, independently accessing resources and exploring their environment.
- Planning approaches were at an early stage, with scope to embed children's interests more fully to support responsive, meaningful learning.
- Positive relationships with families were evident, with parents describing staff as approachable and supportive.

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.

The service had established vision, values and aims, which were under review in consultation with parents and staff. There was an opportunity to strengthen this further by meaningfully including children's voices. As a result, children's views had the potential to be more fully reflected in the direction of the service, supporting inclusive practice and improved outcomes.

A shared improvement plan was in place across the school and nursery. It prioritised increasing children's engagement, curiosity and independence through consistently high-quality, child centred learning experiences. Staff evidenced this through the ongoing development and audit of the indoor environment, creating more purposeful, inviting and responsive spaces. Children were more engaged and motivated, showing increased curiosity and confidence to explore independently.

Audits, including accident and incident reviews, were in place. It was agreed these could be strengthened by recording clear mitigations to evidence the actions taken by the service. This would strengthen oversight and demonstrate how risks are reduced, supporting children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Policies and procedures were in place and reflected best practice guidance, although some were under review. As a result, children were supported by clear guidance, with ongoing review helping to ensure practice remained current and effective in promoting their safety and wellbeing.

Some self-evaluation processes were in place, including use of the Care Inspectorate challenge questions to support reflection. One staff member commented, 'We have timetabled self-evaluation meetings which provide staff with regular opportunities to reflect on practice, discuss strengths and identify areas for improvement.' There was scope to involve children and families more fully in the self-evaluation process to gather their views, needs and wishes. This meant the service was beginning to identify strengths and areas for development, with scope to enhance outcomes for children through more inclusive evaluation.

Induction checklists were in place to support newly recruited staff. It was discussed how this could be further developed using the 'Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource'. This would strengthen staff confidence and consistency in practice, providing them with a greater understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Staff engaged in local authority training including play pedagogy, curious spaces and the 'Getting it Right for Me' toolkit to support their professional development and enhance play and learning opportunities for children. One staff member commented, "I am able to provide more engaging and meaningful learning opportunities that reflect children's interests and stages of development from training". As a result, this led to more engaging, responsive and meaningful play experiences, tailored to children's needs.

Training records had been developed but are not yet being consistently used by staff. We encouraged the service to fully implement these records to help demonstrate the impact of training on both staff practice and outcomes for children.

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 were happy and engaged in their play and learning. They accessed resources independently and explored spaces with confidence, sharing preferences such as playing in the home corner or drawing. Outdoors, they enjoyed jumping in puddles with peers, laughing and interacting positively. One child commented, 'I like going to nursery and playing outside with the see-saw'. Parents also highlighted rich outdoor experiences, including planting and nature activities. As a result, children experienced joy, connection and independence, supporting their wellbeing, social development and sense of belonging.

Observations of children's play and learning were recorded in online journals, with families contributing photos and comments. However, individual next steps were not yet consistently identified, although this had been recognised as an area for development. This meant opportunities to clearly support progression in learning were not yet fully embedded.

Planning approaches were at an early stage, with a focus on more intentional practice. We discussed embedding children's interests and child-led approaches more into the planning process. This would lead to more responsive, meaningful learning that supported choice, engagement and progression.

Interactions between staff and children were warm, responsive and supportive. Staff were present across the environment, engaging at children's level, joining in play and sharing stories. Children were praised and their achievements recognised, supporting positive relationships and building confidence. To further strengthen practice, staff should continue to develop approaches that extend children's thinking during play.

Language and literacy were well embedded within the indoor environment. Children accessed mark making opportunities, recognised their names, and engaged in stories. Visuals, including visual timetables, supported communication and helped children understand daily routines. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills were less evident. As a result, children were supported in developing communication and early literacy skills, with scope to further enhance numeracy experiences to support overall learning.

Floorbooks in each area captured children's voices through comments and mind maps linked to their learning. However, evidence of how this was used to extend or build on learning was not always clear. While children's views were valued and recorded, opportunities to fully support progression and deepen learning were sometimes missed. Strengthening this approach would ensure children's ideas more consistently informed high-quality learning experiences.

Children took on responsibility as area inspectors, helping to ensure resources were tidy and organised at the end of the day. This supported a sense of ownership, responsibility and pride in their environment, supporting independence and teamwork.

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.

Children experienced warm, nurturing care from staff who were responsive to their needs. Interactions were caring and respectful, with staff at children's level, engaging in meaningful conversations. As a result, children felt valued, listened to and secure.

Mealtimes were a positive social experience. Children developed independence through self-serving, pouring drinks and clearing away. Staff sat with children, engaging in meaningful interactions and providing support when needed. Water was available throughout the session to children to ensure they kept hydrated. This supported children's confidence, social skills and independence, promoting their wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Personal plans were in place and developed in partnership with families. They captured relevant information about children's care and development. However, reviews, updates and signatures were not always consistent. As a result, while children's needs were identified, plans were not always fully current or responsive. Strengthening review processes would ensure children receive consistent, up-to-date support.

Medication procedures had been implemented. However, inconsistencies in the review of medication records and practices were identified. This indicated a need for more robust monitoring to ensure compliance with guidance. This meant that, while care was generally appropriate, there was a risk that their health and safety could be impacted. Strengthening review processes would support consistently safe and well managed care.

Transitions were carefully planned and tailored to meet the individual needs of each child. Within the setting, children were supported to move smoothly between the nursery, LCSC, and the wider school environment. These transitions were managed sensitively to promote confidence, continuity, and a sense of security for every child. Opportunities were provided for children to become familiar with new environments, staff, and routines, helping to ensure that each transition is positive and successful.

Families were welcomed into the service at drop off and collection, supporting positive relationships between staff and families. Feedback was positive, with parents describing staff as warm, welcoming and approachable. One parent noted, "Staff are very friendly and supportive", while another highlighted that, "They are always welcoming and friendly on drop off and pick up, take an interest and always feedback any concerns". Some parents suggested more regular updates on the online app and increased stay and play opportunities. As a result, children benefitted from strong, trusting relationships between home and nursery, with scope to further strengthen communication and engagement.

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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