St. Dominic's Primary Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Petersburn Road
Airdrie
ML6 8DX

Telephone: 01236 794 818

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 May 2026

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015348

About the service

St. Dominic's Primary Nursery Class is registered to provide care to a maximum of 40 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time.

Children are cared for across two play rooms and have access to an enclosed outdoor space. The service is located in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire.

At the time of inspection, 30 children were present.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 12 and 13 May 2026 between 08:30 and 15:30, feedback was provided to the service on 14 May. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- reviewed electronic feedback provided by 16 families
- spoke with a three parents/carers
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- reviewed electronic feedback from staff
- spoke with one visiting professional
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances which we discuss in leadership and management of staff and resources.

Key messages

- Strong, supportive leadership fostered a committed and reflective staff team focused on improving outcomes for children.
- Clear vision and values, developed with families and staff, shaped practice and supported children's experiences.
- Children were highly engaged in rich, meaningful play that promoted independence, creativity and confidence.
- Staff interactions were responsive and nurturing, supporting children's wellbeing and extending learning through play.
- Children benefited from a wide range of inclusive, child-led learning experiences across indoor and outdoor environments.
- Positive relationships with families supported partnership working and contributed to children feeling secure and valued.
- Systems to support health, wellbeing and care were in place but required greater consistency to strengthen safe practice.
- Approaches to self-evaluation and monitoring were developing, with clear potential to further 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	5 - Very 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's vision, values and aims were displayed within the setting and reflected its ethos and aspirations for children who attended the service. These had been developed in consultation with staff and families. They were shared with families every six months to help them remain current. Parents told us leaders were supportive and inclusive, with committed staff, strong teamwork and effective communication. One parent told us: "The staff are extremely hardworking and go above and beyond to provide high quality, meaningful experiences". Staff and parents spoke positively about leadership within the service. Staff described feeling supported and listened to. They reported improved opportunities to contribute to ongoing developments. Parents shared they were grateful that they had built positive relationships with the leadership team and described them as "visible" and "available". This helped to shape the service in a way that met children's needs.

External professional feedback indicated positive and effective partnership working, which supported children's experiences. It was reported that staff knew children well and implemented agreed strategies, supporting progress over time. Staff were described as proactive in seeking advice and maintaining communication to meet children's needs. Families were supported to understand their child's development and next steps through ongoing information sharing. As a result, children benefited from coordinated support that promoted their communication, wellbeing and overall development.

Management engaged well during the inspection and were committed to their role. They shared ongoing improvements within the service and recognised the importance of these on outcomes for children. The service had been engaged in improvement over a sustained period, with evidence of developments across areas such as the environment, interactions and planning . We encouraged the service to continue to evaluate the impact of change.

Quality assurance approaches needed to be developed to support improvement within the service. A detailed improvement plan was in place and identified some key areas the service wished to improve. These were appropriate to the service and driven by data, with a particular focus on early literacy skills. The service would benefit from developing their approaches to self-evaluation. This would support ongoing improvements that enhance children's experiences and support their overall development.

Monitoring approaches were evident within the service, including observations of practice, environmental walkarounds and professional dialogue. These supported leaders and staff to reflect on children's experiences and identify areas for development. However, these approaches were not yet consistently structured or fully documented across all areas, including medication and accidents. Further development of a more systematic approach would support greater consistency in recording, evaluating and evidencing impact over time.

Staff accessed training to support their skills, knowledge and developmental needs. Training had been identified in line with children's needs and staffs interests. This included play on pedals, Makaton and forest

school. Staff were then encouraged to share training with each other within the playroom. They were expected to reflect on their own learning and identify the impact on children. Through this approach, staff were encouraged to take on champion roles in their areas of interest. Parents spoke positively about the impact of staff skills, with one noting that staff "go above and beyond to provide high quality, meaningful experiences". This meant that children benefited from a reflective staff team who were motivated to provide positive outcomes for children.

There were systems in place to support infection and prevention controls. Children washed their hands at key times of the day such as before snack and after using the toilet. Surfaces and tablecloths were wiped before and after use. This meant that children were protected from potential illness due to vigilant staff.

Daily risk assessments supported staff and children to identify hazards and manage risks effectively. Children used SIMOA, (Care Inspectorate Keeping Children Safe campaign), to develop safety awareness and active supervision. They also used Sid and SHANARRI, a toolkit using stories to support understanding of wellbeing and safety. This was evident during forest school visits, where children used words like "safe" and "boundaries." This demonstrated that safety approaches were embedded in practice and understood by children. This meant that children were developing an awareness of the world around them and how to keep themselves and others safe.

There was a good mix of skills and qualifications within the team. The service delivered an induction programme that supported staff in developing their knowledge and confidence. This included the use of the Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource which supported staff to engage in reflective practice and identify their own areas for improvement. We discussed how this could be further developed by evidencing the support provided by mentors. Staff spoke positively about their induction and commented that their team, along with management, were supportive. All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). This meant that children were cared for by staff who had the correct qualifications, further impacting on positive outcomes.

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 actively engaged in play. They benefited from a wide range of meaningful, enjoyable and inclusive, child-led learning experiences. These experiences supported them to learn about their own culture and those of others. They confidently explored resources, followed their interests and demonstrated curiosity and creativity in their play. Children had developed positive peer relationships and collaborated effectively, sustaining shared play experiences.

Staff interactions were responsive and skilful, building on children's cues to extend and deepen learning. Children were eager to share their preferences, including role play, mixing paint and playing outdoors. Comments such as, "I love playing on the bikes" and "I need five skooshes to mix the paint," demonstrated high levels of engagement, creativity and enjoyment. The environment played an important role in supporting this, enabling children to become deeply involved and motivated in their learning.

The play environment provided a very good range of rich, varied and well-resourced experiences to support children's play and learning. Resources were thoughtfully organised to promote independence, choice and sustained engagement. Children confidently accessed all areas of the playroom and led their own learning through imaginative and creative play. For example, one small group worked together to create a puppet show, while another developed a 'café' within the role play area. Children also took on responsibility through roles such as line leader and reporter, which supported their confidence, independence and sense of belonging within the group. This showed that children were confident to lead and develop their own play experiences and were fully in charge of their learning.

Children's health and wellbeing was enhanced through regular, high-quality outdoor play experiences. Children independently self-registered and moved freely between indoor and outdoor environments, demonstrating confidence and autonomy. They engaged enthusiastically in activities such as sand play and developing cycling skills. Open-ended materials and loose parts were embedded across the environment, supporting children to explore, experiment and problem solve independently. This contributed to rich, meaningful play experiences that fostered creativity, resilience and curiosity. Continuing to build on these experiences would further enhance children's engagement and depth of learning.

Children regularly accessed forest school sessions within a safe and well-considered outdoor environment. This space effectively supported and extended learning from within the nursery. Children demonstrated a strong awareness of boundaries and safety, confidently applying this knowledge during their play. There was scope to further develop this area by extending opportunities for more complex, appropriately supported experiences, which would deepen children's learning and enhance their awareness of risk and challenge. Children also benefited from accessing the local community and engaging in multi-generational experiences, further enriching their learning and supporting their understanding of the wider world.

Play experiences strongly supported children's development across language, literacy and numeracy. A wide range of books was available, including those created by the children, promoting ownership and engagement in literacy. Areas were thoughtfully planned to enable meaningful interaction with resources and support children to follow their interests. For example, following a discussion about a birthday party, one child independently created a card using visual supports, demonstrating confidence and achievement. Parents recognised the strength of this approach, with one commenting, "There is a strong focus on child-led learning... allowing [my child] to follow [their] interests." Children confidently used mathematical language in context, such as measuring structures during play. This resulted in children developing confidence, creativity and independence, while strengthening communication and early mathematical understanding through meaningful, self-directed experiences.

Staff interactions were responsive and often skilful, with clear examples of staff building on children's cues to extend learning. Through careful observation, staff supported children to develop their thinking using thoughtful questioning and meaningful conversations. For example, children were encouraged to think about what might happen next during play, helping them develop their thinking skills. There was evidence of strong practice across the team, with some opportunity to further build consistency in how all staff extend learning. This would help to ensure that all staff deliver high-quality interactions and further enhance outcomes for children.

Planning approaches were well developed and reflected a strong understanding of how children learn. There was an effective balance between intentional and responsive planning, with staff working collaboratively to ensure children's voices were central to experiences. Activities were inclusive and skilfully adapted to meet the needs of all children. For example, they independently mixed powder paint and followed visual

instructions, demonstrating confidence and success. This approach supported children to become confident, independent learners who were highly engaged, motivated and involved in their play.

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, caring and nurturing interactions, which supported them to feel happy, secure and valued. Staff knew children well and responded sensitively to their individual needs, helping to build strong, trusting relationships. This was reflected in parental feedback, including, "Staff know [my child] well as an individual and are very responsive to [their] needs" and "I completely trust all the staff and know they have my children's best interest at heart." Personal care was managed respectfully by familiar staff, further supporting children's dignity and wellbeing.

Personal planning showed that staff were working to meet each child's individual needs, using a clear wellbeing approach to plan and review the support they received. This supported continuity of care and positive partnership working. While some minor inconsistencies in recording were identified, the overall approach enabled staff to understand children well, with scope to strengthen recording to further enhance outcomes. This helped ensure children felt respected and supported, promoting their emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Mealtime experiences supported opportunities for independence through self-serving food and drinks. There was scope to involve children more fully during snack to extend independence and life skills. Staff were present and responsive in managing routines, and children demonstrated some awareness of expectations, for example returning to finish meals and clearing plates when prompted. However, some children were standing, moving between tables or becoming unsettled as the routine progressed. This indicated that, while staff were aware of safety expectations, these were not always implemented consistently in practice, which reduced the effectiveness of supervision and introduced unnecessary risk. On day one of our visit, water was not readily available to children throughout the day. This was discussed and water was readily available on day two of our visit.

Children benefited from familiar staff and nurturing relationships, supporting a strong sense of security during transitions. Transitions were identified as a strength by parents, with staff working effectively to promote continuity and prepare children for change. Visual supports enabled children to make choices and move confidently between experiences. There was scope to further refine larger group transitions, as these could at times disrupt play. A more flexible approach would help maintain engagement and support smoother experiences.

Staff actively supported and empowered families through targeted initiatives such as workshops and support programmes. This helped them to build confidence in supporting their child's development. One parent told us, "[staff member] made me a better parent". Parents also told us that they valued the opportunities to be involved within the nursery through initiatives such as stay and play sessions and 'carer's café' events. As a result, children benefited from consistent support between home and nursery, supporting their confidence, wellbeing and overall development.

Systems were in place to support children's health and wellbeing, with staff aware of individual needs. However, some records were not consistently completed, with key information missing or unclear, and monitoring processes not always robust. Ensuring information is accurate and regularly reviewed is important to support safe, timely care. Strengthening recording and monitoring systems would further promote safe practice and improve outcomes for children.

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	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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