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

St.Timothy's Primary School
Old Monkland Road
Coatbridge
ML5 5EA

Telephone: 01236 632 134

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 September 2026

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015368

About the service

St. Timothy's Primary School Nursery Class is provided by North Lanarkshire Council and is located within St. Timothy's Primary School in Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire.

The service is registered to provide care for up to 50 children aged from three years until they start primary school. Children have access to a bright, welcoming playroom with direct access to a large outdoor environment. The outdoor area offers a variety of play experiences that supports children's learning and development.

Children also benefit from regular access to facilities within the school, including the gym hall, which supports a range of learning and physical development opportunities, as well as helping children to experience positive transitions within the school environment.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 15 and 16 September 2026 between 08:30 and 16:30. Feedback was provided to the service on the second day of the inspection.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

On the days of inspection, there were up to 35 children in attendance.

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.

During the inspection, we:

- spoke with three children using the service,
- received feedback from 9 parents,
- spoke with leadership and staff team,
- observed practice and children's experiences,
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment,
- observed the environment, and
- reviewed relevant documentation.

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

- Children benefited from warm, nurturing and responsive relationships with staff who knew them well and consistently promoted their emotional wellbeing, confidence and sense of belonging.
- Strong partnerships with families contributed to a shared understanding of children's needs and ensured consistency between home and nursery.
- Positive, supportive relationships between staff and leaders promoted staff morale and continuity of care.
- Staff used nurturing interactions, skilled questioning and responsive approaches to extend children's thinking, curiosity and creativity. As a result, children demonstrated confidence, independence and enjoyment in learning.
- Tracking, assessment and moderation were effective overall, with scope to strengthen consistency and track progress over time.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

QIs inspected: Leadership and Management of Staff and Resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Leaders had recognised the need to review the nursery's vision, values and aims. They had begun gathering the views of staff and families about what matters most to them and the qualities they value within the service. This demonstrated an awareness that the nursery's vision, values and aims should evolve to reflect the needs of its current community. As this work progresses, leaders should ensure children's views are meaningfully included so that the revised vision, values and aims reflect the rights, experiences and aspirations of the current cohort of children.

The service had established approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning. The improvement plan identified relevant priorities. These included communication and language development, additional support needs, partnership working and outdoor learning. Priorities were informed by consultation with children, families and staff. This reflected a commitment to strengthening inclusive practice.

Leaders had identified appropriate priorities for improvement. However, evaluation processes were not sufficiently robust. Leaders could not clearly demonstrate the impact of improvement activity on outcomes. Several previous priorities remained incomplete. They had been carried forward because of staffing challenges and limited training opportunities. Improvement planning was not consistently focused on measurable outcomes. Success measures often monitored completed actions. They did not demonstrate improvements in wellbeing, engagement, communication or learning. Leaders should strengthen their use of evaluative evidence. This would help demonstrate impact and inform clear next steps.

The service had undertaken self-evaluation activities from the child's perspective. However, gaps in actions, review dates and evaluation of impact meant it was not always possible to demonstrate how findings had resulted in improvements for children. Leaders should strengthen these arrangements to ensure improvement activity is systematically recorded and evaluated.

Quality assurance arrangements required further development. Several policies required updating. These included child protection and medication management. Policies did not fully reflect current legislation, national guidance and best practice. Staff understood their responsibilities. However, policies lacked sufficient operational detail. This limited their effectiveness in supporting consistent practice. Leaders should strengthen policy review arrangements. This would help ensure documentation remains current and supports children's safety, wellbeing and rights.

Governance arrangements relating to health and safety also required improvement. Through review of accident and incident records, we found that leaders did not have a sufficiently robust understanding of Care Inspectorate notification requirements and were unaware that incidents involving medical treatment required notification. In addition, accident and incident audits had not been completed for some time. Consequently, opportunities to identify patterns, recurring risks and emerging concerns may have been missed. We advised leaders to strengthen quality assurance systems, ensuring that monitoring arrangements are proportionate to staff roles and responsibilities and provide effective oversight of children's health, safety and wellbeing (see area for improvement 1).

Recruitment procedures were appropriate, and induction and professional review and development (PRD) processes were in place. However, recording and evaluation were not sufficiently embedded to evidence staff learning, monitor professional growth or inform workforce development. Strengthening these processes would support reflective practice and provide clearer evidence of the impact of professional learning on outcomes for children.

Relationships between staff and leaders were positive and respectful. Staff consistently told us they felt valued and well supported, particularly regarding their wellbeing. One staff member told us, "We are always supported by management during times when needed. Sometimes there are moments of being overwhelmed in situations, particularly with children, and staff are always there to support each other. Management also ensure they regularly check in." This contributed to positive morale, a sense of belonging and continuity of care for children.

Leaders showed awareness of required improvements. They demonstrated a willingness to reflect on practice. Planned developments included regular management meetings and protected leadership time. Leaders also planned to clarify roles and responsibilities. These actions should support stronger governance, quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Areas for improvement

1. Leaders should strengthen governance, monitoring and quality assurance systems to ensure accidents and incidents are appropriately reviewed, regulatory notifications are submitted when required, and emerging risks are identified and acted upon promptly.

This is to ensure that children's health, safety and wellbeing are effectively safeguarded and that the service operates in line with Health and Social Care Standards 4.19: "My care and support meets my needs and is right for me." and 4.27: "I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources."

Children play and learn 4 - Good

QI inspected: 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.

Staff created a warm, nurturing environment where children were confident, engaged and motivated in their play and learning. Responsive interactions supported children to participate fully, make choices and develop positive relationships. Staff consistently positioned themselves at children's level, using meaningful conversations and sensitive support to extend learning and encourage children to share their ideas. One parent told us, "Nursery staff do a great job in child development and make nursery a fun and enjoyable space for children to learn and develop. They also do a great job linking in with primary school in pre-school year for transition." As a result, children demonstrated high levels of engagement, curiosity and enjoyment.

Children experienced a broad range of well-planned learning opportunities, including sensory play, creative experiences, small world play, mark-making and fine motor activities. Staff skilfully extended children's thinking through discussion and open-ended questioning, encouraging them to investigate, problem solve and explore new ideas. We observed children transferring learning across different areas of the environment.

For example, children used food packaging to support early writing and incorporated natural materials into creative experiences. As a result, children were confident, independent and creative learners.

Children benefited from early access to the outdoor environment and moved freely between indoor and outdoor experiences throughout the day. The outdoor area provided rich opportunities for exploration, physical play and active learning. Staff responded positively to children's preferences and supported them to access experiences safely and independently. Through the nursery's use of the Care Inspectorate's Keeping children safe campaign SIMOA (Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe and Act) approach, children engaged in meaningful risk-benefit play. Visual prompts and discussions helped children identify hazards, make safe choices and develop confidence in managing risk. As a result, children were developing resilience, independence and increasing confidence in assessing risk during play.

Planning was flexible, responsive and informed by children's interests, needs and stages of development. Staff used a combination of intentional and responsive approaches to support learning. Children benefited from experiences including the Three Read Approach, Bookbug and Forest School sessions, which supported literacy, communication, resilience and connections with the natural environment. Observations were used effectively to capture learning and inform next steps. Staff regularly reviewed progress and shared information across the team, supporting a consistent understanding of children's achievements and development.

Children's learning was enhanced through effective partnership working with families. Online learning journals were used well to record and share experiences, with families actively contributing information and photographs from home. Children could access their own learning journals through individual QR codes, encouraging reflection on their learning. Tracking arrangements supported staff to monitor participation, achievements and progress across the curriculum. Overall, planning and assessment arrangements were well established and responsive to children's interests and developmental needs. Children benefited from a rich learning environment where they could make choices, follow their interests and develop a broad range of skills.

Although some gaps were identified in recording and moderation processes, these did not significantly impact children's experiences or outcomes. We discussed opportunities to strengthen consistency in assessment and moderation processes, ensure learning targets and next steps are more explicit, and complete tracking information consistently to provide a comprehensive picture of children's progress over time.

Staff knew children well and used nurturing, responsive interactions to support engagement and extend learning. One staff member reflected, "A massive achievement is when the children come through the doors smiling and happy to be there." This was evident in the positive relationships, confidence and enthusiasm children demonstrated throughout the inspection. Important strengths in staff interactions, child-centred planning and children's engagement supported positive experiences and outcomes. As a result, children were enthusiastic, motivated and successful learners who were making good progress in their learning and development.

Children are supported to achieve — 4 - Good

QI inspected: 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's emotional wellbeing was supported through warm, responsive and nurturing interactions with staff who knew them well. Staff consistently approached children at their level, whilst offering reassurance, praise and encouragement. Staff also took time to listen to children's views and feelings. These positive interactions helped children feel secure, respected and valued.

Staff were proactive in identifying their own training and development needs and met regularly with management to discuss professional learning opportunities. Staff spoke positively about the support they received from leaders and reflected on the impact of recent training, which had strengthened their understanding of children's individual needs and informed how they supported children. As a result, children benefited from nurturing approaches that promoted emotional wellbeing, positive relationships and inclusion.

Personal care routines were guided by children's individual needs, established patterns and parental preferences. Staff recognised and responded sensitively to children's cues and adapted routines to ensure children felt comfortable, secure and respected. This personalised approach helped children develop trusting relationships with staff and supported their emotional wellbeing, dignity and sense of belonging. As a result, children experienced care that was nurturing, responsive and tailored to their individual needs.

Mealtimes provided opportunities for children to socialise and build relationships. Staff sat alongside children, engaging them in meaningful conversations which supported language development, confidence and a sense of belonging. Children were encouraged to develop independence by serving their own water and clearing away food waste. Appropriate arrangements were in place to support children with allergies and dietary requirements. However, opportunities for children to take greater ownership of their mealtime experience were not yet fully maximised. Although children could self-serve small portions of vegetables, most food continued to be served by staff. We discussed extending opportunities for children to independently serve food, make choices about portion sizes and have requests for additional food responded to more effectively. Staff demonstrated a positive willingness to reflect on and improve practice during the inspection. This should further strengthen children's independence, confidence and decision-making skills.

Effective transition arrangements supported children and families before they started at the service. Home visits enabled staff to build positive relationships and develop an understanding of children's individual needs and circumstances. Throughout the day, visual prompts, timers and gentle reminders helped children understand routines and expectations. Staff used praise effectively to encourage participation and responsibility. As a result, children experienced positive transitions and settled confidently into nursery life.

Staff knew children well and could confidently discuss their wellbeing needs, interests and learning goals. However, opportunities were identified to streamline personal planning arrangements. Information was recorded across several documents, resulting in duplication and making key information less accessible. In addition, children's full personal plans were not routinely reviewed and updated with parents. Leaders should simplify documentation and strengthen review processes to ensure information remains meaningful, current and informed by those who know children best. This would further support partnership working and responsiveness to children's evolving needs and interests.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of children's health and medication needs. Medication was stored securely and staff could confidently describe administration and recording procedures. Their knowledge of children's healthcare needs helped ensure children received appropriate support, promoting their health, wellbeing and safety.

Relationships between staff and families were strong, respectful and meaningful. Parents spoke highly of the nurturing care provided and described staff as approachable, caring and responsive. These positive partnerships supported consistency between home and nursery and contributed to children feeling safe, valued and well supported. Important strengths in nurturing practice, relationships and partnership working promoted secure attachments, a strong sense of belonging and positive outcomes for children's wellbeing and confidence.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

0345 600 9527

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