Gracemount Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

45 Gracemount House Drive
Edinburgh
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 September 2026

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003015859

About the service

Gracemount Primary School Nursery is a daycare service for children which forms an integral part of Gracemount Primary School. The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 56 children at any one time between the ages of three and entry into primary school.

The school is situated in a residential area in Edinburgh. It is close to local amenities such as shops, parks and transport routes. The nursery is situated in a self-contained building within the school grounds. The building consists of two playrooms, each with a kitchen area. The playrooms are connected through the toilets and changing facilities, allowing children to move freely between the areas.

There were 30 children attending the service on both days of the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 1 and 2 September 2026 between 09:40 and 16:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 2 September 2026. 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 throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- reviewed feedback from six parents using the service
- spoke with two parents during our inspection visit
- spoke with eight staff members and the manager
- observed practice and staff interactions
- assessed core assurances
- reviewed documents
- spoke with children.

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 an improvement was identified. This was relating to quality assurance systems. This is reported under the quality indicator: leadership and management of staff and resources.

Key messages

- Warm, nurturing relationships helped children feel safe, valued and supported to thrive.
- Professional learning supported positive outcomes for children.
- The service should strengthen quality assurance practices to support children's ongoing wellbeing and development.
- Children experienced play that was meaningful, engaging and led by their interests.
- Inclusive practice strategies supported children's communication and development.

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 clear visions, values and aims, which were shared with the school community. These were reflected in practice through nurturing relationships, inclusive approaches and a focus on learning through play. We suggested including children and parents in developing visions for the nursery. This was to ensure the vision fully reflected the needs, interests and aspirations of children and families.

Staff demonstrated a commitment to continuous professional learning. Training in digital learning, behaviour support and language and communication had strengthened staff practice. One member of staff told us: "The behaviour training has supported my use of strategies to support the children." As a result, children benefited from tailored approaches, such as the use of visual supports and simple signing to enhance communication and understanding. Staff also provided engaging digital learning experiences that helped children develop literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful ways.

Peer observations supported improved outcomes for children within their communication and wellbeing. Staff reflected on how meaningfully they interacted with children. Video observations deepened this reflection. As a result, children benefited from responsive and nurturing interactions. This supported their wellbeing and helped them feel valued, listened to and included in their learning.

Most staff demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the children in their care and were able to respond appropriately to their individual needs. Information was gathered to support children's safety, wellbeing and development. However, quality assurance and monitoring systems were not yet sufficiently robust to ensure that staff consistently had access to the most up-to-date information needed to meet children's individual needs. For example, personal plans, learning journals and health and medical information were not always reviewed and updated. This meant that children were not always benefiting from meaningful and individualised support. More effective monitoring of these areas would help ensure that information remained accurate and current. This would enable staff to plan and respond consistently to children's changing needs, particularly during staff changes (see area for improvement 1).

Improvement plans for the service were ongoing and supported outcomes for children's emotional wellbeing. For example, the service had carried out targeted play experiences focused on emotional literacy. As a result, children had developed a better understanding of emotions and how to self-regulate. The service planned to increase consultation with families and children on improvement and self-evaluation and use this to inform change. We agreed that this would help ensure that service developments continue to reflect the needs, views and experiences of children and families.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children experience consistently high-quality outcomes, the provider should develop robust quality assurance processes. This should include, but not be limited to, monitoring and oversight of personal plans and medication.

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

Children were happy, confident and fully engaged in their play experiences. They benefited from a variety of indoor and outdoor resources that supported learning across numeracy, literacy, creativity, imagination and exploration.

Staff were responsive to children's interests and learning in the moment. We observed staff supporting children to make kites on a windy day, creating a fun and engaging learning experience. Children were encouraged to problem-solve and test ideas, exploring how kite tail lengths affected movement in the wind. This supported the development of children's numeracy skills.

Staff sensitively encouraged children to negotiate and share resources during play. This helped children build positive relationships and make independent decisions. Staff were attuned to children's individual needs and understood when to observe or when to offer support. This responsive approach extended learning opportunities and promoted children's wellbeing during play experiences. For example, when children were using scissors, staff offered praise and encouragement while reinforcing safe practices. Children demonstrated an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. One child commented, "you don't cut your skin." This approach supported children's confidence, independence and wellbeing.

Children had access to outdoor play throughout parts of the day. One parent told us: "My child loves being outdoors and enjoys the house and pretend play equipment but also the bikes and climbing frame." There was space for children to run freely, supporting their physical development and health and wellbeing.

The outdoors provided opportunities for children to explore a range of natural resources, including tyres and guttering. This supported the development of children's creativity, investigation and problem-solving skills. Children were able to further develop their coordination and physical skills through access to bikes, trikes and scooters. We discussed with staff, the importance of ensuring helmets are readily accessible at all times to promote children's safety.

We discussed with the service that children's play and choice were, at times, restricted to facilitate group experiences. For some children, this interrupted their engagement in play and reduced opportunities for sustained learning. The service should ensure a flexible approach to group experiences. This would support children to explore interests and allow play to come to a natural end.

The service had recently introduced a new planning approach. There was a good balance between responsive and intentional planning. We observed that children's interests were being developed through spontaneous learning opportunities. For example, children's curiosity about an apple tree growing in the nursery garden was extended by staff. They provided a real-life experience by visiting a local shop to purchase ingredients before making apple crumble. This experience supported children's curiosity and engagement while promoting learning across literacy and numeracy.

Observations of children's play and learning experiences included individualised and group observations. Some observations identified next steps for learning. We discussed with the service the need to make observations more personalised to reflect each child's interests, strengths and needs. This would support staff to plan experiences that build on children's unique interests and promote progression in learning and development.

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 and nurturing care from staff who responded sensitively to their emotional needs. They listened attentively to children and interacted with them at their level with genuine interest. This meant children felt respected and included, supporting their confidence and wellbeing.

Staff used inclusive approaches to support children's wellbeing and communication. For example, they used song books with visuals for children to choose from, and shared stories and songs in different languages. This supported children's social interactions, literacy development and ability to express themselves.

Mealtimes were a relaxed and sociable experience for children. Children were supported to develop independence by washing their hands, serving themselves and clearing away afterwards. This supported their confidence, responsibility and self-help skills. At times, staff needed to leave the dining area to complete tasks. This reduced opportunities for sustained supervision and interactions with children. We discussed ways to address this, such as serving food at tables, to enable staff to remain with children more consistently. This could promote richer conversation, strengthen supervision and further enhance the nurturing mealtime experience. The manager agreed and planned to explore this with the team.

Transitions to nursery were positive experiences for children and families. Children had opportunities to visit the nursery prior to attending, which supported their confidence and sense of security. One parent told us: "My child has settled in very well to the nursery. I feel this is largely down to the staff making them feel welcome and safe. [Child] always comes out very happy, full of chat about the different things they have been doing."

Personal plans were completed with parents prior to children attending the service. This enabled staff to gather information about children's interests, routines and individual needs. However, personal plans were not always reviewed and updated regularly. As a result, important changes in some children's wellbeing and development, along with meaningful next steps and strategies to support were missed. More robust monitoring and auditing of personal plans would help ensure information is regularly reviewed and reflects children's evolving needs and circumstances. This would support children to receive care and support that is responsive to their individual needs.

Key information to support the administration of medication for children was being gathered. However, we suggested strengthening procedures by collecting more detailed information about children's individual health needs. This could include clear actions to be taken in an emergency. We also found that medication information was not being reviewed regularly. This increased the risk of changes in health needs not being identified promptly. More robust oversight and monitoring arrangements would help ensure children received safe, responsive care that reflected their current health needs. When we raised this with the manager, we were satisfied that action would be taken to ensure timely reviews of children's medication.

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	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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