Burnbrae Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Burnbrae Early Years
Chesters Court
Bonnyrigg
EH19 3PS

Telephone: 01312 714 605

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 September 2025

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Service no:
CS2003016398

About the service

Burnbrae Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a service maximum of 132 children at any one time aged from three years to not yet attending primary school.

The setting shares a campus with St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School. The setting has its own entrance and is set across three playrooms, the Oak, Chestnut and Rowan rooms. Each playroom has access to a kitchen, children's bathroom and direct access onto the large enclosed outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 2 September 2025 between 08:00 and 14:30 and Wednesday 3 September 2025 between 10:45 and 14:30. 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service;
- spoke with staff and management;
- considered feedback from 11 families through an online questionnaire;
- considered feedback from 12 staff through an online questionnaire;
- spoke with visiting professionals;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and the management of the service.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have 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; and
- 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 and families benefited from nurturing, consistent support that promoted wellbeing, equity and smooth transitions.
- Children experienced meaningful, inclusive play and learning that nurtured curiosity, supported achievement and promoted confidence.
- Safe, welcoming and well-planned environments supported independence, a sense of belonging and fun.
- A culture of reflection and continuous improving ensured confident staff continually enhanced care, play and learning.
- Staff were deployed with flexibility and teamwork, creating a calm, responsive environment where children experienced consistently high quality support.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and Support

Children experienced warm, nurturing relationships which promoted their sense of safety, security and wellbeing. Staff engaged at children's level, using affectionate, face-to-face interactions. Children confidently sought cuddles and comfort, which were warmly reciprocated, showing the depth of trust and attachment. Families strongly recognised this, telling us, "The staff are very good, caring and I feel so comfortable leaving my child in their care" and "My child adores all the staff and they are very approachable". These secure relationships contributed to children's confidence, resilience and positive emotional development.

During morning self-registration, children took part in an emotional check-in with their family, placing a marker on a display to show how they were feeling. This allowed staff to observe wellbeing and respond appropriately, ensuring emotions were acknowledged and supported. Information gathered was used to plan interactions, provide reassurance and keep children's wellbeing central throughout the day.

Staff were attuned to children's individual needs, particularly during transitions. When children were unsettled, they were gently reassured and given time, comfort toys or prompts to help them settle at their own pace. A positive development since the last inspection was that families were warmly invited into the setting at drop off and collection, supporting informal conversations, positive transitions and continuity of care. Families also shared skills and experiences such as music or French, enriching play and learning. Staff described positive relationships with families, built through openness and an "open door" ethos. Stay-and-play sessions, consultations and daily handovers further strengthened trust and partnerships.

Inclusive practice was evident, showing clear improvement since the last inspection. Families reflected this, saying staff, "know the learners well" and that inclusion was "a big part of nursery life". Children with additional support needs were meaningfully included alongside their peers, with staff adapting spaces, resources and routines to reduce barriers and enable participation. Strategies such as visual cues, songs and predictable language were used consistently, giving children a strong sense of safety and understanding. This rights-based approach ensured all children were respected, valued and supported to feel they belonged. Families told us staff provided, "appropriate tools to progress and support my child". Leaders also demonstrated persistence in supporting attendance, at times arranging for children to be collected from home to ensure continuity of play and learning.

Personal planning supported individual needs effectively. Systems such as pastoral logs and the Scottish Education Management Information System (SEEMIS) helped staff track wellbeing and plan next steps in partnership with families and professionals. Families were active participants, contributing to plans and learning priorities. One practitioner explained, "We fill in personal plans and 'all about me' documents with families so we have all the relevant information on how to best support children". Families told us they valued this involvement, sharing, "I am always kept up to date on Seesaw (an online platform) and love seeing what my child has been up to" and "I feel I can approach any member of the team and they know my child really well".

Mealtimes were calm, sociable and promoted independence. Children poured drinks, set tables and supported one another, while staff modelled positive eating habits by sitting alongside them. Families confirmed children enjoyed food at nursery, telling us, "My child tries new food at nursery that they wouldn't necessarily try at home". Individual plans and allergy records were well managed, ensuring safety and inclusion.

Overall, children thrived in a nurturing and inclusive environment where rights, dignity and wellbeing were consistently promoted. Families valued the welcoming, approachable team and the sense of continuity this created. As one family summarised, "I highly recommend the nursery for their caring and nurturing approach to all learners". Consistent, responsive care ensured children were secure, happy and achieving positive outcomes.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children benefited from high-quality play and learning experiences that were varied, stimulating and responsive to their interests. The introduction of the free-flow gardens significantly enhanced choice and independence, enabling children to move confidently between spaces and take ownership of their play. Families valued this, telling us, "The door is always open so children can go outside to play whenever they wish" and "Rain or shine my child is outside and I can see this from photos on Seesaw". The result was a joyful atmosphere where children had fun in their freedom.

Children benefited from a wide range of outdoor physical play opportunities which supported their health, wellbeing and physical development. Bikes and scooters provided experiences that promoted balance, coordination and spatial awareness while also encouraging children to negotiate space safely alongside their friends. The large climbing structure and climbing wall, challenged children's strength, agility and problem solving as they assessed risk and celebrated achievements with staff and each other. As well as physical activity opportunities for role play, mark making and performance on the stage area, encouraged children to use language and literacy in imaginative and meaningful ways. Comfortable seating areas with books encouraged a love of reading by making stories a regular and enjoyable part of play. Staff enriched play through modelling turn-taking, extending ideas and recognising effort. These approaches supported problem-solving, resilience and social skills.

Indoors, children benefited from spaces that were carefully considered to offer a balance of comfort and challenge. Creative areas were well resourced with open-ended material that encouraged children to explore, make choices and represent their ideas in imaginative ways. Carefully planned invitations to play stimulated curiosity and extended thinking, with staff using these opportunities to prompt conversations and encourage problem solving. Families confirmed play was purposeful as well as fun, saying experiences were, "individually tailored to my child's interests, made fun and engaging".

Planning processes were informed by children's voices and observations. Families knew of this as they told us, "All learning environments and activities are set age specific and meet the needs of all learners" and "Through all the different activities, my child has come a long way in their learning". Floor books, journals and online platforms demonstrated how children's ideas shaped learning. Staff were confident in linking practice to guidance such as Realising the Ambition and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Staff described planning as responsive and flexible, shaped by observations, reflections and discussions as a team. They worked hard to ensure resources were accessible and sourced additional ones where needed to extend children's play and learning.

Strong community links extended children's experiences. Children participated in local woods trips, gala days, fayres and visits to local shops for cooking ingredients. Families told us, "My child loved the trips into the woods" and enjoyed seeing families share skills such as French during nursery sessions. Forest school and outdoor learning opportunities promoted curiosity, resilience and stronger connections with the natural world. The Midlothian Council transition project "Mid Mouse" helped to foster a sense of community across the nursery and school creating a sense of pride.

Overall, children experienced an inclusive learning environment where play was central, curiosity nurtured and achievements celebrated. The balance of planned and spontaneous opportunities, alongside inclusive and responsive approaches, ensured children were motivated, engaged and achieving well.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery environment was welcoming and fostered a strong sense of belonging. Playrooms were thoughtfully designed to promote choice, independence and inclusion, with careful attention to detail. Warm touches such as fairy lights, children's names and family photographs contributed to a homely, nurturing atmosphere. Spaces were set up with care, offering inviting resources that sparked curiosity and engagement. This attention to detail helped children feel valued and recognised as individuals. In particular, the Chestnut room demonstrated a strong sense of belonging through the personalised design and thoughtful preparation. There was scope for the Rowan and Oak rooms to fully adopt this approach to further enhance the sense of identity and belonging across the setting.

Recent changes to open up the free-flow gardens created larger spaces for children to explore, challenge themselves and socialise. This development had been carefully planned, with staff deployment supporting safety and meaningful engagement. The result was a relaxed, purposeful atmosphere where children clearly benefited from increased autonomy. Families told us their children enjoyed a wide variety of outdoor experiences, including nature play, forest school sessions, local walks and role play with friends in the sandpit, climbing frame and outdoor kitchen. Families strongly agreed that their children were cared for in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment.

Indoor and outdoor environments were well resourced and supported a wide variety of play, from active and creative play to quieter experiences. Children's views influenced how spaces were used, for example through decisions to paint a zebra crossing to link the two gardens and redesign play spaces. This helped them feel valued, included and motivated in their play.

Staff ensured the environment was safe and secure through robust daily risk assessments indoors, outdoors and in the shared garden space. They were proactive in identifying and addressing maintenance issues, working closely with janitorial and office staff. Registers and headcounts were carefully managed and staff recognised the importance of monitoring boundaries and gates in open spaces. They were also mindful of safety in the wider community, teaching children about boundaries during woodland play and nature nurture sessions. Staff described the environment as a "warm, inviting and nurturing place where children feel safe, secure and happy" and told us they continually reflected on how to improve both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place throughout the service to minimise the spread of infection. Children were reminded and supported to wash their hands. Staff washed their hands often, role modelling for children and sharing the importance of good hygiene. This helped keep children safe and well.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Following valuable feedback from families, children and staff, the setting had recently launched their new vision and values, 'Be You, Belong, Connect and Grow'. This was underpinned by the values of 'Love, Courage and Curiosity'. These reflected a shared commitment to fostering an inclusive, empowering and connected community where everyone could thrive.

Leaders and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Quality assurance systems had been implemented and were inclusive. Staff voice actively shaped improvement as they contributed to the standards and quality improvement plan (SQIP), ensuring play and learning were informed by reflective discussions and children's needs. This ensured everyone had ownership of progress and able to celebrate achievements. The SQIP was well structured, clearly outlining actions, responsibilities, indicators of success and how impact would be measured. Priorities such as developing staff teams, family engagement, free-flow spaces and embedding additional support needs approaches were directly linked to positive outcomes for children.

Self-evaluation was a regular part of practice. Staff used floor books, questionnaires and shared reflections to capture what was working well and what could improve. For example, the team reflected on the impact of the shared gardens and made adjustments based on observations of how children used the space. Leaders implemented a structured model of self-evaluation which built staff confidence in reflecting on practice. Staff described how this gave them clarity and ownership of improvement.

Leadership at all levels was evident. Staff spoke positively about being listened to and valued by managers and about the strong sense of teamwork that had developed. This collaborative culture created consistency for children and families and ensured improvement activity was sustainable. Senior staff modelled reflective questioning and supported staff to use national frameworks and best practice guidance, leading to improved practice.

Action taken in response to the previous inspection requirement and areas for improvement was evident. Support at fortnightly senior meetings had provided a structure for improvement. Over time, this reduced as confidence grew, with seniors taking greater responsibility. The setting shared their work more widely by hosting New Early Years Group (NEG) meetings and inviting staff from other settings to visit. This outward-looking approach promoted shared learning.

Families were encouraged in the improvement process through newsletters, feedback opportunities and invitations to contribute to playrooms. Examples included family members leading music and French sessions, enriching children's experiences and strengthening partnerships. Leaders also responded to parental feedback, for example moving stay-and-play sessions to the afternoon to better support family commitments, which resulted in improved attendance and engagement.

Staff professional development was prioritised and closely aligned to improvement planning. Training in trauma-informed practice, play pedagogy and intensive interaction supported staff knowledge and confidence. Staff were supported through formal appraisal processes and informal one-to-ones, with clear outcomes linked to leading on and developing key areas of practice. As a result, everyone worked together in delivering play and learning experiences tailored to children's individual needs.

Staff and families confirmed that leaders were approachable, visible and supportive of wellbeing. Weekly evaluations, daily debriefs and structured self-reflection created a culture where improvement was shared, celebrated and ongoing. This meant that children and families consistently benefited from a setting where practice was reflective, responsive and continuously improving.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were deployed flexibly and effectively to meet the needs of all children. The introduction of free-flow access to the gardens was carefully planned, with staff positioned to ensure children's safety while enabling independence. Staff communicated continually with each other, creating a calm, well-supervised environment where children could move freely and make choices about their play. Staff adapted well to changing circumstances, showing meaningful improvement since the last inspection. For instance, when heavy rain altered outdoor plans and more children chose to play indoors, the team reorganised staffing between playrooms and outdoors to ensure children remained safe, engaged and supported. One staff member told us, "We always work through it together and support each other when things change suddenly".

The strong sense of shared purpose among staff was clear, which shaped their daily practice and interactions with children. This commitment was reflected in the heartfelt comments shared by both staff and families, including, "I am proud to be a part of the Burnbrae Early staff team, we work really hard as a team to ensure our children get the best care and learning opportunities" and as a family told us, "I really admire all the staff members. They are all super hard working. Well done to each and every single one of you". These reflections highlighted the positive impact of consistent, nurturing relationships and partnership approach to supporting children's care, play and learning.

Teamwork was a significant strength. Staff reflected together on approaches such as sustained shared thinking and linking practice back to their values. Leaders highlighted how staff could, "finish each other's sentences" in reflective discussions, showing the depth of their shared understanding. Staff described feeling part of, "one nursery" where plans were centred in meeting the needs of both children and colleagues. This collaborative approach supported consistency, calm routines and secure relationships. Families confirmed this, telling us, "Staff are always friendly and approachable, always keeping me up to date and going above and beyond to support through any issues".

Staff breaks were well managed so that children's care was not affected. Clear arrangements meant that when key staff were absent, responsibilities were covered, offering consistent reassurance to children and families. A family reflected, "There are always enough staff in this service to meet my child's needs. Staff work collaboratively and communication is key, particularly when supporting children with additional support needs".

Staff were matched to roles according to their skills and knowledge, with seniors leading training and carrying out observations of staff practice, ensuring quality was sustained. The use of staff expertise in additional support needs was a particular strength. Knowledge and strategies to support children were shared across the team, ensuring children experienced continuity of support.

Management supported staff wellbeing, recognising its importance in achieving positive outcomes for children. Leaders created opportunities for reflection and gave staff the autonomy to develop a new, calm, relaxing space for them to rest. This thoughtfully designed area included soft seating, warm lighting and personal touches that made it feel welcoming. Staff told us this helped them feel valued and able to recharge during their breaks. As a result, they returned to the playrooms refreshed, contributing to the stability, positivity and consistency children experienced in their care. Families commented positively on the staff team, with one family saying, "I have a very professional yet friendly relationship with all the staff. The fact that they are so caring and nurturing made it easy from day one to leave my child in their care".

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 19 May 2025, the provider must ensure that staff create a more inclusive, supportive, and emotionally secure environment for all children.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

a) all children receive consistent and timely interactions, particularly those requiring additional support;
b) established strategies are consistently followed, monitored and evaluated to support children in self-regulating their emotions, ensuring that these practices are integrated into daily routines including the use of additional spaces such as the sensory and nurture rooms;
c) staff engage in further professional learning and continued engagement with the relevant agencies to enhance their understanding of individual children's needs and to embed consistent practices across the setting.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of Users), Regulation 4(2)(b) (Privacy and dignity of service users) and Regulation 5(1)(2) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This requirement was made on 14 November 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Our observations showed that staff consistently offered warm, responsive and timely interactions. Children requiring additional support benefited from calm and reassuring responses which supported their confidence and engagement. Feedback from families confirmed that children were well supported and that staff understood their individual needs.

Strategies agreed with families and external agencies were integrated in daily routines. Staff consistently implemented approaches to support emotional regulations, with children accessing spaces appropriately. Staff could clearly describe how these strategies were monitored and adapted to meet children's changing needs.

Records and discussions with staff showed that staff had undertaken targeted training. Partnership working with agencies was evident and had strengthened staff understanding of children's needs. Staff practice was consistent across the setting, contributing to improved outcomes for children.

Met - within timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To strengthen connections staff should routinely welcome families into their child's playroom.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

The manager, and staff may find the following document useful to support them in meeting this area for improvement:
'Me, my family and my childcare setting' (Care Inspectorate, 2024).

This area for improvement was made on 19 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Families were observed being warmly welcomed into playrooms, with staff engaging in positive conversations. Families told us they felt included and valued.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's overall wellbeing, management should provide clear guidance and individualised support to staff, ensuring that they have the knowledge and resources to make well informed changes that prioritise the best interests of the children. Everyone should take shared responsibility for fostering a nurturing and supportive environment. Management should actively oversee staff practice, identify any gaps, and implement strategies to address them to ensure that high quality care is consistently provided.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I experience high quality care and support based on evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 19 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff confirmed that management provided clear guidance and were readily available to discuss practice. Supervision and monitoring systems were effective in identifying gaps and providing tailored support. As a result, staff were confident in their roles and demonstrated a shared responsibility for nurturing and supporting children.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children's routines, familiarity, and individual needs are prioritised, staff deployment should be carefully planned and informed by child development knowledge and good practice guidance. The setting should develop a clear strategy for supporting children's needs during staff breaks, ensuring that transitions and staff movements do not disrupt children's routines and sense of security.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work well together'.
(HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 19 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff deployment was observed to be well organised, minimising disruption to children's routines. Break cover was thoughtfully planned, ensuring continuity of care and familiar staff available for children. Children remained settled during transitions and staff demonstrated a strong awareness of the importance of consistency and security.

This area for improvement had been met.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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