Coalburn Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Coalburn Road
Coalburn
Lanark
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Telephone: 01555 820 221

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 May 2026

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003016820

About the service

Coalburn Primary School Nursery Class is a daycare of children service, provided by South Lanarkshire Council. The nursery is located within Coalburn Primary School in the village of Coalburn.

The service is registered to provide care for a maximum of 32 children aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

Children are cared for in a spacious playroom with access to a cloakroom and toilet facilities, along with direct access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area and sensory room. They also benefit from shared spaces within the school, including the dining and gym hall, classrooms and playground, offering a wider range of play and learning experiences.

The setting benefits from its rural location, providing valuable opportunities for children to take part in regular walks and visits to local shops and green spaces.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 and 28 May 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 information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with a small number of children using the service
- gathered feedback from family members of children using the service
- spoke with staff and management present on the days we visited the service
- gathered feedback from 3 staff members using a questionnaire
- gathered feedback from 4 family members using a questionnaire
- observed staff practice and children's experiences
- 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

- A shared vision, closely aligned with the primary school, was evident throughout daily practice. Staff nurtured and supported children to be the best they could be within a caring and inclusive environment.
- A strong culture of reflection and continuous improvement was embedded across the service, with children, families and staff actively contributing to its ongoing development.
- Children were confident and enthusiastic learners who led their own play and developed independence, resilience and a love of learning.
- Literacy and numeracy were very well embedded across the learning environment, with engaging displays, meaningful experiences and a range of resources supporting children to develop key skills.
- Staff across the nursery and primary school worked together to create a consistent approach to learning and wellbeing, contributing to reflective practice, improvement planning and strong communication with families.
- Carefully planned transitions, including home visits and settling-in experiences, helped children and families build trusting relationships and feel safe, secure and confident from the outset.
- Children experienced positive and relaxed mealtimes, including opportunities to enjoy outdoor snack experiences, promoting independence, choice and wellbeing.
- A wide range of enriching experiences, including book bug sessions and swimming lessons, further enhanced children's learning, confidence and overall development.
- Children and families were at the heart of the service. Strong, nurturing relationships and a close sense of community ensured everyone felt valued, included and connected.

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	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

Leadership 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement. As a result, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service had a clear and well-established vision that reflected the values of the wider school community. Strong partnership working between the nursery and school supported a shared commitment to providing consistent, nurturing and inclusive experiences. This vision was evident in practice and understood by staff, who were dedicated to helping children 'be the best they can be'. As a result, children felt a strong sense of belonging and were supported to grow in confidence and flourish in their achievements.

The leadership team engaged openly and positively throughout the inspection process. They were reflective, receptive to feedback and demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Leaders promoted a positive culture where staff felt valued, listened to and well supported. Staff spoke positively about leadership, describing it as approachable and supportive in both daily practice and times of change. This fostered a strong team ethos and contributed to consistency for children, positively supporting their overall wellbeing.

Leadership opportunities were shared across the service, with champion roles aligned to staff interests and strengths. Staff showed enthusiasm and commitment within areas such as literacy, numeracy and outdoor learning. This enabled them to lead developments, build on their strengths, support parental engagement and contribute to improvement priorities. As a result, children and families benefited from engaging, meaningful experiences and strong, supportive partnerships that enhanced learning and development

The setting demonstrated a strong commitment to reflective practice and continuous improvement. A well-planned quality assurance calendar supported ongoing self-evaluation throughout the year, while monthly improvement themes encouraged staff to reflect on practice and engage in professional dialogue. Leaders used floor books and focused questioning to support reflection and identify next steps. The leadership team spoke about their plans to re-introduce peer observations as a way to build on existing strengths and continue developing the quality of experiences across the setting.

Quality assurance processes supported leaders to monitor practice and identify areas for further development. Regular audits, including accidents, medication, personal plans, learning journals and the environment, provided valuable opportunities for reflection and helped maintain a clear overview of the service. Management shared plans to further formalise aspects of quality assurance, building on current approaches to support ongoing improvement and strengthen practice. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of improvement priorities and were actively involved in developing and implementing changes identified through reflection and monitoring, helping to create a positive and supportive environment for all.

The service improvement plan was clearly linked to nursery and whole-school priorities, with a strong focus on enhancing children's experiences. Developments, including the sensory room and improved lunchtime experiences, reflected the needs and interests of children. A 'road journey' display illustrated improvement priorities and celebrated progress, helping children and families to see how the nursery continues to grow and develop, supporting children's wellbeing, curiosity and engagement.

Children and families were encouraged to contribute to the life of the service through ongoing discussions, consultations and feedback opportunities. Parents' views were valued and helped to inform decision-making and future planning. One parent shared, 'the service is amazing and always looking for ideas to develop the nursery,' while another highlighted that surveys were provided regularly. As a result, children and families felt well informed, listened to and supported through strong, positive partnerships between home and nursery.

The service showed a commitment to maintaining a skilled and supported workforce. Staff were appropriately registered with their relevant professional bodies, helping to support safe practice and ongoing professional learning, with this reflected in the care and experiences provided for children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement. As a result, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children were confident and enthusiastic learners who led their own play, developing independence, resilience and a love of learning. They were happy and highly engaged in a range of meaningful experiences both indoors and outdoors. Staff created a supportive environment where children were encouraged to make choices, follow their interests and develop skills at their own pace. As a result children demonstrated high levels of involvement and sustained concentration as they explored their interests through play.

Children experienced consistently positive interactions. Staff were attentive, responsive and skilled in extending children's learning through meaningful conversations, questioning and encouragement. They listened carefully to children's ideas, valued their contributions and used interactions to promote curiosity, critical thinking and problem-solving. Children were supported to reflect on their experiences, share their thinking and deepen their understanding through rich, meaningful interactions that enhanced learning across the setting

Children benefited from a relaxed and unhurried pace to the day. Free-flow access between indoor and outdoor environments enabled them to make independent decisions about where and how they wished to play and learn. Rolling snack and lunch arrangements supported uninterrupted play and allowed children to sustain engagement for extended periods. This promoted wellbeing, independence and ownership of learning.

Outdoor experiences provided rich opportunities for creativity, curiosity and physical development. Children particularly enjoyed potion-making, using natural materials to explore and experiment through imaginative play. They also engaged in creative chalk experiences, drawing around each other and comparing sizes, using language such as "taller" and "shorter" in a meaningful and enjoyable way. Opportunities including building with loose parts materials, balance bikes and climbing equipment encouraged exploration and confidence in managing risk. Staff joined play naturally, extending thinking through gentle conversation and shared ideas.

A strong focus on keeping safe was evident throughout the setting. Children were supported to assess risk and make safe choices in their play. Approaches such as the 'Simoa safety elephant' helped reinforce safety messages, while visual prompts around the environment reminded children how to keep themselves and

others safe. Children showed growing confidence in managing risk and demonstrated an awareness of boundaries.

Indoor experiences encouraged creativity and collaboration. Children engaged with enthusiasm in art, junk modelling, role play and sensory play. They particularly enjoyed making playdough together, working cooperatively as they mixed, kneaded and shaped it. This supported fine motor skills, creativity and shared learning, with children remaining deeply engaged for sustained periods.

Story and group experiences supported communication and emotional development. Children relaxed with staff while exploring stories linked to feelings and wellbeing. They practised simple breathing techniques to help them feel calm and were keen to share and model these approaches with others. This supported children to manage their emotions and build positive, caring relationships.

Language, literacy and numeracy were very well embedded across experiences. Children accessed books, mark-making materials and storytelling opportunities independently, practicing cutting with scissors supporting early skills development. An outdoor book bug session was a highlight, with children joining in songs, rhymes and stories with enthusiasm. They confidently used actions and Makaton, showing enjoyment and increasing confidence in expressing themselves. As a result, children were developing key skills across early literacy, communication and fine motor development.

Planning was responsive and based on children's interests. Daily 'pow-wow' meetings enabled staff to share observations and agree next steps, ensuring children's voices were reflected in experiences. A 'wow' display celebrated children's achievements. While next steps were regularly discussed, we suggested recording these more consistently in floor books to support continuity. Revisiting learning supported children to build on prior experiences and make progress over time.

Observations and learning journals captured children's achievements across areas of development. Contributions from families, including home learning, strengthened connections between home and nursery and supported meaningful learning. One parent told us, 'My child has a wide variety of opportunities at nursery, which is evident in the learning journal. It is clear that activities are linked to my child's individual needs, with detailed explanations of what they are developing and learning.' Initiatives such as numeracy bear bags further supported this, helping children to extend their learning at home in a fun and engaging way.

A range of additional opportunities, including woodland experiences, intergenerational visits, woodwork and swimming lessons, further enriched children's learning. These experiences supported confidence, curiosity and a strong sense of belonging within their community.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement. As a result, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing Care and Support

Children experienced warm, nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well, and responded sensitively to their individual needs. Positive, trusting relationships were evident throughout. Children were confident, happy and secure in their environment. Staff interactions were consistently kind, patient and

respectful, helping children feel valued and emotionally supported. This created a strong sense of community, where children and families were clearly at the heart of the service.

Children formed close relationships with one another and demonstrated kindness, respect and care in their interactions. They played cooperatively, encouraged each other and developed friendships, supporting their social confidence and sense of belonging.

Personal plans were in place for children and developed in partnership with families. These included important information about children's routines, interests and health care needs, supporting staff to respond consistently and in a way that reflected each child well. Children's views were included where appropriate, ensuring their preferences and needs were reflected in their care. This supported continuity between home and nursery and helped children feel understood, valued and well supported. One parent commented, 'staff always make a point of discussing goals achieved and what's next and are very good about strategies that work around my child'.

Staff worked closely with other professionals to support children who required additional support. Clear overview documents helped ensure staff shared a consistent understanding of children's strengths, needs and developmental progress. This supported continuity of care and enabled children to receive appropriate support.

Mealtimes were relaxed and child-centred, providing positive social experiences. A flexible approach allowed children to eat at a time that suited them, helping to minimise interruptions to play. Children made independent choices, helped prepare tables and invited peers to join them. Staff sat alongside children, engaging in warm, meaningful conversations whilst ensuring their safety. Children confidently managed routines such as pouring drinks, clearing dishes and washing hands, supporting independence and self-care skills. Children ate well, enjoying healthy choices. One parent told us, 'At drop-off in the morning, my child can see which foods are on offer for the day and choose which meal they want. They always love the meals and fruit available.' Opportunities to enjoy snack outdoors further enhanced these experiences.

Personal care routines were carried out sensitively, supporting children's dignity and comfort,. Children accessed toileting facilities independently, with staff nearby to offer reassurance if needed. We discussed continuing to monitor the management of the toilet door to ensure it remained closed at all times, in line with good infection control practice.

Children were supported to manage their emotions, Access to a sensory room and quieter spaces allowed children time to relax, reflect or regulate their feelings. These spaces were used effectively to meet individual needs and supported children to feel calm and settled.

Appropriate procedures were in place to support children's health and wellbeing. Staff had a clear understanding of their role in keeping children safe and were trained in child protection and first aid. Medication was stored safely, with clear records and care plans in place. As a result, children were supported to feel safe, secure and well cared for.

Settling-in arrangements were carefully planned and responsive to the needs of individual children and their families. They were invited to attend nursery events prior to starting, supporting children to become familiar with the environment and begin building relationships. Home visits provided valuable opportunities for staff to gather important information, build positive connections and help children feel safe, secure and well supported as they began nursery

Transitions were thoughtfully supported through a shared programme based on 'The Colour Monster Goes to School'. Children explored feelings linked to change and became familiar with new environments, staff and routines. Close collaboration between nursery staff, school staff and families ensured a consistent approach, helping children feel confident and well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Strong, respectful relationships between staff, children and families created a welcoming and inclusive environment. Families were encouraged to spend time in the setting, contribute to learning and engage in everyday conversations. Opportunities such as stay-and-play, book bug, parent engagement (PEEP) sessions and community events strengthened partnerships and reflected strong links with the wider community. Parents told us they valued opportunities such as PEEP and stay-and-play sessions, which supported their own learning.

Parents spoke very positively about the service. Comments included, 'My nursery is the best ever' and 'I cannot praise the service enough. The team are deeply caring and highly vigilant, providing a safe and nurturing environment where my child thrives.' Others shared, 'This is a wonderful service and my child absolutely loves coming every day... the staff do an amazing job,' and 'They are excellent at involving parents in nursery activities, making us feel like a true part of the nursery community'. As a result, children and families experienced a strong sense of belonging, trust and connection within the setting.

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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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