East Linton Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

School Road
East Linton
EH40 3AJ

Telephone: 01620 860 216

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 June 2026

Service provided by:
East Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002600

Service no:
CS2003016982

About the service

East Linton Primary School Nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 20 children aged from three years to primary school entry. The service is provided by East Linton Council.

The nursery is situated in an room attached to the primary school providing early learning and childcare. East Linton is a rural town in East Lothian. The nursery comprises of a playroom with kitchen area and children's toilet and nappy changing facilities. The playroom has access to a outdoor space and the larger school playground.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 June 2026 between 9:15 and 15:45. Feedback was shared with the service on 22 June 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 complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke with children using the service,
- Gathered feedback from four families through online questionnaires,
- Spoke with staff and management,
- Observed practice and daily life,
- Assessed core assurances, including the physical environment, and
- Reviewed documents

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure that 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 received warm, nurturing and caring support, contributing to them feeling happy, secure and content.

Children's rights were fully embedded into the service, with their views actively sought and respected.

Children were confident in leading their own play and learning, supported by high quality and skilled interactions from staff.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were effective and led to sustained improvements, with children actively involved.

Indoor and outdoor environments supported a wide range of play opportunities and enabled children to explore and learn across different areas.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	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 settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service demonstrated a strong and shared commitment to its vision, values and aims, which were aligned with those of the school and clearly embedded in daily practice. Staff effectively supported children to develop independence, resilience, responsibility and perseverance. This contributed to a nurturing and inclusive ethos where children felt listened to, their achievements were recognised and families felt welcomed and involved. The vision, values and aims were prominently displayed within the service, alongside examples of children's contributions and their understanding of what these meant in practice. Children were also fully included in wider school experiences, such as assemblies, where initiatives like 'Hero of the Week' celebrated and recognised their achievements.

Self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements were used effectively to support continuous improvement. Leaders had established clear systems, that included regular monitoring activities, weekly communication and structured opportunities for reflection. As a result, staff understood priorities for improvement and felt empowered and included in decision-making. They spoke knowledgeably about changes that had improved outcomes for children and families. The children's voices were valued; they made suggestions, shared their ideas and took part in improvement planning. This meant children were meaningfully engaged and able to influence change within the setting. Time was recognised as a factor in completing some aspects of paperwork and leaders acknowledged that some information still required to be collated and added to the floor book.

Initiatives such as SIMOA (Safety, Impact, Monitor, Observe and Act) were used effectively to promote and enhance children's safety and wellbeing. Children were actively involved in the initiative, for example through taking a cuddly elephant home, which encouraged meaningful engagement with families. Families then demonstrated how children applied their learning in real-life situations and shared how they helped to keep the elephant safe while out in the community. This supported children to develop a strong understanding of safety in a practical and meaningful way.

The service had created meaningful opportunities for staff to lead improvement. Staff had contributed confidently to developments, such as garden improvements, snack planning, digital development and intergenerational learning. Most of these were planned, carried out and their impact reviewed to build on approaches that made a positive difference. This had built some leadership capacity across the team and contributed to informed, continuous improvement for children.

Quality assurance systems were in place and supported children's experiences, play environments and staff development. The staff team demonstrated a positive and reflective approach and showed a clear willingness to embrace change and improve outcomes for children. Regular audits of personal planning, accidents, incidents and medication contributed to a safe and secure setting and supported children's health and wellbeing. Moving forward, responsibility should be given to all staff, to ensure a shared responsibility for auditing processes. This would help maintain continuity and reduce gaps, particularly during periods of staff absence.

Staffing levels had been a challenge at times throughout the year. Supply staff reported that they felt well supported and confirmed that they had received an appropriate induction. All staff worked well as a team. Staff were deployed effectively to ensure children's safety and support their choices throughout the day. They moved responsively with children across both indoor and outdoor environments and communicated well with one another to maintain appropriate supervision and provide consistent support. Staff responded promptly to children who required reassurance or additional assistance, which promoted children's wellbeing and helped sustain their engagement. Parents described staff as friendly, approachable and that they genuinely cared for the children in their care.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces — 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

The nursery entrance was welcoming, with a range of information available for families. The team recognised the importance of involving families in children's learning and development. Recent improvements had been made to encourage greater participation and included interactive approaches that share children's voices and experiences. These supported increased interest and involvement from families, helping to strengthen the connection between home and the nursery. A parent commented "Fantastic staff, caring environment and fab activities".

The nursery room was well organised and enabled children to access a range of resources and experiences. Children used the space confidently and were engaged in sustained periods of play. Staff supported the use of these spaces. The home corner included a variety of literacy and numeracy resources alongside imaginative play materials such as dressing-up clothes, a keyboard, telephones, a computer mouse, leaflets, magazines and cookery books. The story corner was well used by children, and a well-established book area, large construction bricks, and craft area supported engagement in play and learning. Consideration should be given to the size and scale of some resources, including the sand tray and dough area, which were relatively small due to the size of the indoor space.

Children accessed the outdoor area independently. A wide range of resources was available, and included a recently developed large sand pit that was well used and children engaged in digging, burying and exploratory play. This was appropriately covered when not in use. A parent commented "Brilliant use of outdoor space including trees etc". The mud kitchen had been enhanced to include literacy and numeracy resources. A small reading nook was also in use, and a fairy garden had been developed, with positive feedback from a parent noted. Additional resources included water trays, wooden blocks and loose parts.

Plans were in place to further develop the outdoor area, that included reviewing the use of visual numeracy resources. There were also plans to introduce forest school approaches and "out and about" sessions to strengthen community links, including visits to the library, care home and local walks.

Children's rights were fully embedded within the service. Changes to the environment were informed by children's views, with their ideas and suggestions actively listened to and implemented where possible. In addition, staff had used improvement toolkits to review the environment and made appropriate changes as required. This process was well documented and regularly reviewed to support ongoing improvement.

Some maintenance issues were identified within the setting. These included areas around the handwashing sink in the children's bathroom requiring repair, and a section below the Velux window where there was

evidence of previous leaking. Ventilation fans were observed to be dust-covered and would benefit from thorough cleaning to reduce any potential fire risk. In addition, the guttering required clearing. The service was aware of these issues and had begun taking steps to address them.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children benefited from very good experiences for play, learning and development. Staff knew children well and used this knowledge to adapt interactions and provide resources that engaged children. This helped children to feel comfortable and join in play experiences, as they were provided in a way that suited them.

Children were confident and independent within the play environment. Free-flow access between indoor and outdoor spaces enabled them to follow their interests. They could make choices and move resources between areas. As a result, children were engaged in purposeful play, which reflected their curiosity and interests.

Staff interactions had a positive impact on children's progress. They used skilled questioning and gentle support to extend children's thinking, communication and problem-solving. We observed staff helping children to work together and agree how they could take turns at an activity. These approaches supported children to develop life skills in a meaningful, age-appropriate way.

Children could access their learning journals and they were enthusiastic about using them to record their learning or add a picture. These captured aspects of learning and included some links with home, staff used these effectively with children to support engagement. Some of the observations were variable and focused more on what children were doing rather than what they were learning. Some next steps were not always clearly identified or consistently tracked. The senior leadership team were aware of this and was working with staff to strengthen how learning is evidenced, developed and progressed for all children.

Planning reflected a balance of intentional and responsive approaches. Children were actively involved in developing their own play, with their contributions recorded by staff during planning discussions. The plan, do and review approach was embedded in practice and generally worked well. However, some areas would benefit from more detailed recording, and it was noted that time constraints impacted this. Observations and tracking were used to inform play and learning, which supported appropriate levels of challenge and demonstrated children's progress. A parent commented "Very child centred. Always involving children in the planning process",

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced very good nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well and responded sensitively to their individual needs. Interactions were calm, kind, respectful this helped children feel safe, valued and included. Staff promoted children's rights effectively through everyday practice. They used their knowledge of children's personalities, routines and preferences to provide reassurance, comfort and support.

Children benefited from thoughtful support during transitions across the day. Staff used agreed strategies to help children move between experiences successfully. This contributed to children being settled and supported to participate fully in all aspects of the nursery.

Personal planning arrangements were used well to support children's health, wellbeing and safety. Important information, that included dietary needs, allergies, medical conditions and individual strategies, had been gathered. Continued review of the strategies would further support children. Staff were knowledgeable about children's plans and used them effectively to provide consistent support.

Snack experiences were calm, nurturing and unhurried, this supported children to feel secure and valued. Children were encouraged to make choices and develop independence in ways that were appropriate to their age and stage, such as preparing snack, selecting their own crockery and food, and clearing away afterwards. Children's views were meaningfully included, for example through voting on snack preferences this enabled them to influence decisions and feel that their opinions mattered.

Lunchtime routine supported children's sense of belonging and wellbeing, with opportunities to visit the dining room. This helped strengthen connections with the wider school community and supporting smoother transitions. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of individual dietary and health needs, which meant children were included, safe, and able to enjoy positive mealtime experiences. Overall, these approaches supported children to develop confidence, independence, and a sense of inclusion in daily routines.

Medication systems were managed very well and supported children's health needs to be met safely and accurately. Information that related to allergies and intolerances was clearly displayed and well understood by staff. Accidents were appropriately recorded and monitored, with records reviewed to identify any patterns or trends, supporting children's ongoing safety and wellbeing.

Partnerships with families were a significant strength. Staff had built warm, respectful relationships with parents and carers and communicated effectively through a range of approaches. Families told us they felt listened to and well supported. Regular discussions, shared strategies and family learning opportunities had strengthened continuity between home and the service. This contributed positively to children's wellbeing and progress. Parents told us, "Always looking for feedback" and "Monthly newsletters are great for keeping everyone in the loop".

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	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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