St. Martin's Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

High Street
Tranent
EH33 1HJ

Telephone: 01875 610 211

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 September 2026

Service provided by:
East Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002600

Service no:
CS2003016992

About the service

St Martin's Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 25 children aged three years until entry into primary school. Staffing ratios as stated in the National Care Standards for Early Education and childcare up to the age of 16 must be maintained at all times. A minimum of two adults must be present at all times.

The nursery is located in St Martin's Primary School within the East Lothian town of Tranent. The school is located close to local amenities such as shops, libraries and local green spaces. The children have access to a main playroom, cloakroom, sensory room, dinner hall, gym hall and enclosed garden space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 7 September 2026 between 09:30 and 15:30 and Tuesday 8 September 2026 between 10:30 and 14:30. One inspector carried out the inspection.

There are currently 16 registered for the service. On both days of the day of inspection there were 14 children present who were not yet of school age.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- met with 14 children using the service,
- spoke with the practitioners and leadership team,
- reviewed feedback from four families and four practitioners,
- observed practice and daily life,
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and management of the service.

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 warm, nurturing and inclusive environment supported children's wellbeing.
- High-quality play and learning experiences promoted fun, curiosity and challenge.
- The leadership and staff team demonstrated a clear understanding of areas to develop. This was being supported through detailed plans for this to be actioned.
- Changes within the team structure were being met with positivity and leadership were supporting the transitions this brought.

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	5 - Very Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

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.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service's vision, values and aims had been developed alongside the school and adapted to reflect the ELC setting. These focused on nurturing potential and promoting faith, love, courage and learning. Aims included creating a safe environment where children could learn, engage and develop respect for themselves and others. During the inspection, we observed staff consistently supporting these values through caring, nurturing and child-centred approaches. Inclusive practices enabled children to access the environment and routines in ways that met their individual needs. As a result, children were engaged and well supported in their experiences. Plans were in place to review the vision, values and aims further, including a greater focus on children's rights. This will help ensure they remain relevant, reflect the service's ethos and promote a shared understanding across the setting.

An improvement plan was in place that identified key priorities for development and how these would be achieved. Inclusive communication had been identified as a priority area. We observed this being effectively implemented through the environment and staff interactions, helping to support children's understanding and communication. This demonstrated that improvement work was already underway and positively impacting outcomes for children.

Recent changes within the staff team had provided opportunities to reflect on and review practice across the service. This included evaluating learning environments to ensure they were purposeful and responsive to children's interests and learning needs. Staff were involved in identifying priorities for improvement and told us they felt able to influence change within the service. Some families told us they had opportunities to contribute to the development of the service, while others felt there could be greater involvement. The leadership team had recognised this and had begun seeking views to strengthen engagement and communication with families.

A quality assurance calendar was used to plan and monitor key tasks within the service. Previous inconsistencies had resulted in some reviews of personal plans and medication not being completed within required timescales. The leadership team had identified this and taken action to address it. An updated calendar demonstrated a clear understanding of quality assurance responsibilities and included reviews of personal plans, medication, practice and routines. This supported more effective oversight and monitoring of the service. Leaders had also identified the need to involve staff more fully in quality assurance processes and were beginning to allocate areas of responsibility. This will help develop staff skills, encourage shared ownership of improvement activity and support positive outcomes for children through consistent, high-quality practice.

Policies and risk assessments supported children's safety within the service. The need for more early years specific guidance on medication and personal plans was discussed. This was being reviewed by the local authority and will help improve clarity, consistency and understanding of practice requirements.

Overall, the service demonstrated a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. To

support continued progress, self-evaluation processes should continue to be embedded, helping to sustain a culture of reflection, improvement, and positive outcomes for children and families.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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.

Playing learning and developing

The service had recently reviewed the layout of the environment and provision of resources, to enhance children's experiences. As a result, children benefited from a range of well-organised play spaces that promoted choice, creativity and sustained engagement. Daily routines supported free-flow access between indoor and outdoor environments, enabling children to explore and be independent. Parents valued these opportunities, particularly the range of outdoor, sensory and creative experiences available. One parent commented, "Most days my child goes in one door and straight out the other". We observed children to be highly engaged across the play spaces.

Resources effectively promoted sustained engagement and learning. Staff had observed that children showed particular interest in water, mud and sand play and successfully promoted this interest. For example, children remained highly engaged in investigating water flow using gutters positioned along a sloped path. This experience encouraged curiosity, problem-solving and early numeracy skills as children discussed speed, quantity and measurement. Staff were attentive and showed skill in supporting play. Replenishing resources such as water and sand, enabled children to sustain their play and remain engaged in activities of interest. Staff were responsive in supporting and extending children's emerging interests in the moment. An example of this was when a child became interested in searching for bugs outdoors and wanted to make binoculars in their play. Staff supported them to create binoculars, encouraging discussion, creativity and problem-solving. Other children then also became interested and were supported to join in. As a result of staff being observant and supportive, children engaged in enjoyable, child-led experiences that supported their learning and wellbeing.

Planning had recently been reviewed and updated to better reflect children's interests, identified learning needs and responsive play opportunities. Staff used planning effectively to inform experiences across the environment. For example, children's interest in baby dolls was reflected through resources in the home corner and water play areas, enabling meaningful and sustained play. This demonstrated that planning was purposeful and responsive to children's interests. A Floorbook was also being used to capture children's views and support the planning process. As this approach was in the early stages of development, the team continued to review its effectiveness and work collaboratively to ensure planning remained meaningful, child-centred and focused on supporting positive outcomes for children.

Systems for tracking children's learning were in place, and leaders demonstrated a good understanding of areas requiring further development. They had identified that tracking information was not always being used effectively to inform progression and next steps in learning. A revised tracking system had recently been introduced to make it easier to identify learning gaps and support more focused planning. While children's learning journals reflected a range of experiences, there was limited evidence of clearly identified next steps. This had already been recognised within the service improvement plan. Leaders showed a constructive and reflective approach to improvement, with a clear commitment to strengthening planning and assessment processes to ensure children continue to receive experiences that are meaningful, relevant and supportive of their individual progress and wellbeing.

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, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing and responsive care from staff who knew them well and understood their individual needs. Interactions were calm, respectful and caring, helping children feel safe and secure. Parents were positive about the support provided, with one stating, "They are always friendly, caring and approachable, and I feel comfortable talking to them about anything." Staff used small-group experiences, individual interactions and children's interests effectively to encourage engagement and build positive relationships and promote wellbeing. As a result, children confidently sought reassurance and support from staff. They were engaged in experiences that promoted their communication, social skills, emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Children were supported through transitions with sensitivity and care. Staff promoted inclusive environments and adapted support to meet children's developmental needs. Carefully planned approaches helped children settle successfully and build confidence. Staff worked closely with families to identify strategies that met individual needs. One parent told us, "My child is involved in all aspects even if they find it a little difficult, things are always altered for their needs." As a result, children experienced positive wellbeing outcomes and felt included, supported and valued within the setting.

Staff consistently used a range of supportive communication strategies, including visual cues, signing and familiar routines. These approaches were embedded in practice and supported children's understanding, regulation and participation. During the inspection, we observed staff using these strategies effectively to help children manage transitions, understand expectations and remain engaged in play and learning. This demonstrated a consistent and child-centred approach to supporting wellbeing and inclusion.

Children's privacy and dignity were respected during personal care routines. Staff provided support sensitively and discreetly, ensuring children experienced care in a manner that promoted comfort and self-esteem. Mealtimes were relaxed, social occasions where children were encouraged to develop independence skills. Children were supported to make choices, serve themselves where appropriate and clear away after meals. Staff and catering staff worked well together to create a calm and positive experience, while remaining responsive to individual preferences and needs.

Personal plans were in place and supported children's individual care and wellbeing needs. Chronologies recorded key changes to care and strategies, helping to ensure continuity of support. While some reviews had previously been completed out with expected timescales, all personal plans were up to date at the time of the inspection. Leaders had identified this as an area for improvement and planned to strengthen quality assurance processes to support timely reviews. This demonstrated a commitment to maintaining accurate records and ensuring children's changing needs were effectively supported.

Parents were highly complementary about the care and support their children received. They described staff as nurturing, approachable and responsive and valued the strong relationships that had been developed. Comments included, "Not just the nursery staff, but the head teacher too, they are very supportive, they are all friendly and approachable and can't do enough for the children and us as parents". Others added, "They have built up such an amazing bond with all staff". And, "I really appreciate how well they know my child and how much care and attention they give them". As a result, positive and trusting relationships had been established, helping children and families feel secure, settled and confident 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.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	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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