Wallyford Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Futures Way
Wallyford
Musselburgh
EH21 8FF

Telephone: 01316 652 865

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
18 August 2026

Service provided by:
East Lothian Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003016996

About the service

Wallyford Primary School Nursery is located within Wallyford Primary School in the village of Wallyford, East Lothian. The nursery provides early learning and childcare for 128 children aged three years to those not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. It benefits from modern, purpose-built accommodation and access to a range of indoor and outdoor spaces that support children's learning, play and wellbeing.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 and 18 August 2026. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. There were 59 children present on the first day of our inspection, and 58 on the second day. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- received electronic feedback from seven families whose children attended the service
- received electronic feedback from four staff who worked in the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- 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, one area for improvement was identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Effective consultation and reflective practice have led to improved learning environments and greater child engagement, confidence and independence.
- Staff professional learning and evaluation have enhanced children's experiences, relationships, wellbeing and learning opportunities.
- Children were confident, independent learners. They engaged in a wide range of high-quality indoor and outdoor experiences that supported their literacy, numeracy, social and problem-solving skills.
- Planning was responsive to children's interests and needs, although greater consistency in recording, evaluating and evidencing children's progress would strengthen outcomes further.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing care and positive relationships, helping them feel safe, secure and supported in their wellbeing, independence and transitions.
- Personal plans and medication procedures require greater consistency to fully support individual needs.

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.

Children benefited from a culture of improvement, consultation and reflective practice. Staff had prioritised improvements to planning, interactions and learning environments. Children had been actively involved in designing a newly opened play space, and their ideas, including separate dining and living areas within the role-play area, had been implemented. During the visit, children were observed confidently engaging in imaginative play and making purposeful use of the space.

Staff had reviewed and enhanced learning environments across the nursery, including block play, gross motor play, small world experiences and loose parts provision. Following professional learning, staff further developed these areas and regularly evaluated how children used them. Adaptations were made where engagement was limited, such as relocating and redesigning the music area using children's chosen songs, rhyme books and props. As a result, children were observed accessing a range of well-organised resources, supporting their creativity, exploration and learning. Staff evaluations showed that children had settled well into the revised environments, developed positive relationships with a wider range of staff and peers, and engaged in a broader range of learning experiences.

Staff training and learning had improved outcomes for children. Following forest school training, staff had introduced opportunities for outdoor learning, including growing vegetables with children, and planned further experiences to build on this work. Sensory resources, such as sensory bottles, had also been introduced and were used enthusiastically by children. These experiences supported children's curiosity, sensory development and understanding of the world around them.

The nursery demonstrated a commitment to consultation and participation. Parents, staff and children had contributed to reviewing the vision, values and aims of the school community. We discussed with the management team how these could be refined further to better reflect the unique identity and aspirations of the nursery.

Parents' views had informed a range of service improvements. Feedback had led to changes in the planning and communication of stay-and-play events, helping families engage more effectively with nursery life. Parents had also contributed to evaluating nursery to Primary one transition arrangements. Their feedback informed future planning, including earlier engagement with families and increased opportunities to meet teachers. These developments aimed to further support children's confidence and sense of security.

The nursery had carried out consultation regarding changes to free-flow play arrangements. Parents, children and staff had been involved in the planning process, ensuring their views shaped decision-making. As a result, a revised free-flow model was introduced while maintaining children's relationships with their key workers. During the visit, children were observed confidently moving between indoor and outdoor learning environments, independently selecting experiences based on their interests and preferences.

Staff who had recently joined the service spoke positively about the support they had received. A structured induction programme and mentoring arrangements had helped them quickly develop an understanding of children's needs, routines and wellbeing requirements. As a result, children experienced continuity of care from staff who were well supported to build positive relationships and provide consistent, nurturing experiences.

Monitoring information was being used to support service improvement. However, more robust auditing of personal plans, learning stories, medication, accidents and incidents would strengthen quality assurance processes further. This would support earlier identification of patterns, strengths and areas for development, helping to ensure children's health, safety, wellbeing and learning needs continued to be met effectively.

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 observed confidently moving between indoor and outdoor learning environments, independently selecting experiences that reflected their interests and choices. Staff maintained awareness of children's whereabouts and interactions, supporting their safety while promoting independence, confidence and self-directed learning.

Children engaged in a wide range of meaningful play experiences that supported their learning and development. For example, children demonstrated developing fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination as they used tools such as scissors with confidence. Others explored sand and water play, transporting, pouring and mixing materials while investigating their ideas and making connections through conversation. Staff engaged positively alongside children, extending learning through sensitive questioning, discussion and the provision of additional resources. As a result, children were able to direct their own learning, solve problems and remain engaged in play. Opportunities to develop early numeracy skills were naturally embedded within these experiences as children counted, compared quantities and explored concepts such as volume and measure.

Children benefited from opportunities to develop literacy, communication and social skills. Some children listened attentively to stories read by staff, responding to questions and engaging in discussions. Others participated in imaginative play, demonstrating creativity as they cared for dolls and recreated familiar experiences from their everyday lives. Through these interactions, children developed friendships, communication skills and positive relationships with their peers.

Children participated enthusiastically in group experiences, joining in with songs, actions and opportunities to make choices. They demonstrated confidence in expressing their views and preferences. During discussions, children spoke positively about their experiences and interests, while others demonstrated developing numeracy skills through confidently counting, sorting and recognising quantities during play.

Children benefited from spacious, well-resourced learning environments that promoted independence, curiosity and choice. Resources were organised and accessible, enabling children to freely select materials to support their play and learning. A wide range of experiences was available across the curriculum, including creative materials, music resources, loose parts, construction materials, sensory experiences, numeracy resources and opportunities for imaginative play. The environment reflected children's interests and encouraged them to make decisions about their learning.

Staff described using a combination of responsive and focussed planning informed by observations of children's interests, wellbeing and developmental needs. There was evidence that some identified interests had been successfully incorporated into planned experiences. For example, opportunities for children to develop numeracy skills were integrated into play experiences, while enhancements to musical experiences reflected children's interests and preferences.

There was evidence that planning processes supported staff to respond to some children's interests and emerging learning. However, approaches to recording, evaluating and evidencing this were not yet consistent. While some planning records clearly showed how children's interests and experiences had been taken forward through photographs, observations and children's comments, this was not evident across all planning documentation. In some instances, children had identified topics and interests they would like to learn more about, but there was limited evidence demonstrating how these had influenced subsequent planning.

Staff met regularly to discuss children's wellbeing and progress and identified appropriate actions to support individual learning needs. While strategies and next steps had been recorded, updates on the impact of these interventions were not consistently evident. Strengthening this aspect of planning and monitoring would support staff to demonstrate children's progress more clearly and ensure that support strategies continued to meet children's individual needs effectively.

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 were happy, settled and engaged throughout the setting. Staff interacted with children in a warm, caring and nurturing way, offering reassurance, comfort and cuddles when needed. This was particularly evident for children who were new to the service or returning after an absence, helping them to feel secure and supported.

Personal care routines were carried out sensitively and respectfully. Staff sought children's permission before cleaning noses or changing nappies and gently reminded children about handwashing after wiping noses or handling bugs. These positive interactions helped children feel respected and supported.

Families were warmly welcomed and positive relationships were evident during drop-off and collection times. New families were given time to discuss how their children were settling and share important information. The service further promoted strong partnerships through events such as seasonal breakfasts and stay-and-play sessions, supporting children's sense of belonging.

Across all playrooms, staff were nurturing, responsive and compassionate. Children, including those new to the setting, appeared settled and comfortable. Staff responded promptly to children's emotional needs and supported positive transitions by helping children and families become familiar with routines and the environment. Staff were also sensitive and reassuring towards parents who were anxious about their child's start.

Staff knew children well and were able to describe their needs and the strategies they used to support them. Children benefited from this responsive care. However, this knowledge was not consistently reflected within personal plans, limiting their effectiveness as a record of support. Having reviewed personal plans we could see that information had been gathered from families, plans did not always clearly identify children's individual needs or explain how these would be supported. Some recorded information, including developmental, health and wellbeing needs, had not been explored in sufficient detail to identify strategies for support. As a result, personal plans did not always demonstrate how individual outcomes for children would be achieved. (See area for improvement)

Medication was generally stored safely. Minor improvements were required to ensure medication bags were consistently labelled with children's full details. We also found examples where children had started attending without medication identified by parents as necessary. This presented a potential risk to children's health and wellbeing.

Lunch was a relaxed and sociable experience. Children were supported to make choices, develop independence and enjoy meals safely. Staff had a clear understanding of individual dietary requirements and ensured these were met. Some children would have benefited from more time to finish their meals in a less hurried manner. At snack times, children could self-serve, promoting independence. Opportunities remained to further enhance experiences by ensuring staff were available to sit with children and promote conversation and social learning.

Children benefited from staff who understood their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff completed annual child protection training and confidently described their role in keeping children safe. Safeguarding records demonstrated effective partnership working and a proactive approach to seeking and sharing information, helping to ensure children and families received timely support.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health, welfare and wellbeing, the provider should ensure that all children have a personal plan which is meaningful, accurate and regularly reviewed. It should reflect children's current needs, circumstances, preferences and any strategies required to support them. Personal plans should provide staff with clear guidance to enable a consistent approach to care and support across the service.

This is to ensure that care and support are consistent with Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that: "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices." (HSCS1.15)

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

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