St. Mary's Primary Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Chapel Street
Cleland
Motherwell
ML1 5QX

Telephone: 01698 274 955

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 October 2026

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003017321

About the service

St. Mary's Primary Nursery Class is a daycare service provided by North Lanarkshire council. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 52 children, aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery is part of St. Mary's Primary School and located within the school grounds. Children and families enter the service through a designated entry area.

The environment includes a playroom, fully enclosed outdoor area, and children's toilets are off the main playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 October 2026 between 08:30 and 17:00 and 07 October 2026 between 08:30 and 12:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 07 October 2026. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received 10 completed questionnaires from families and four from staff
- spoke to three families
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

We have reported where improvement is necessary within Leadership and management of staff and resources.

Key messages

- The service had a clear vision, values and aims that had been developed with parents and staff, supporting a shared approach to practice.
- Daily checklists were in place; however, formal risk assessments had not been developed. More robust risk management systems were needed to support children's health, safety and wellbeing.
- Children's achievements were recognised and celebrated, promoting their confidence, self-esteem and sense of belonging.
- Almost all staff demonstrated warm, nurturing interactions, helping children feel secure, valued and supported in their wellbeing.
- Transitions were carefully planned and tailored to individual children and families, helping children feel secure and confident during periods of change.
- Lunchtime experiences were busy and, at times, unsettled. Some children spent extended periods seated, which reduced their engagement and limited opportunities for meaningful interaction.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate, where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

The service had a vision, values and aims in place, which had been developed through ongoing consultation with parents and staff. This collaborative approach helped ensure that the service's aspirations reflected the views of stakeholders and provided a shared direction for practice. As a result, staff were better supported to deliver consistent experiences for children and families.

An improvement plan was in place, with two key priorities identified for the nursery. The plan was designed over a three-year period to allow approaches to be developed, embedded and evaluated. This supported a strategic and sustainable approach to improvement, helping to enhance outcomes for children.

Self-evaluation processes had been used to enhance the environment, including the development of the nappy changing area and the outdoor cosy nook. Staff used reflective questions such as, "What are we doing?", "How do we know?" and "What could we try now?" to evaluate and improve practice. Children contributed to the development of the cosy nook, ensuring their views informed the space. Staff were beginning to use the Quality Improvement Framework and a Red, Amber and Green (RAG) - rating system to identify strengths and areas for development across key themes. This supported reflective discussions and helped prioritise improvement activity. As a result, the service was developing a more structured approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement, with the potential to enhance outcomes for children.

A quality assurance calendar was in place and outlined some improvement and monitoring activities across the year, with actions broken down into monthly tasks. While this demonstrated a commitment to quality assurance, processes were not yet fully embedded. We discussed extending audit activity to include reviews of personal plans, medication reviews, policies and procedures and risk assessments. This would strengthen self-evaluation and help ensure practice remains responsive to the needs of children and families. (See area for improvement 1.)

Medication was stored safely in individual, clearly labelled bags and appropriate consent documentation was in place. However, some records had expired and required review. We discussed the importance of maintaining up-to-date medication records and parental consents and ensuring medication was readily accessible, when required. As a result, strengthening quality assurance arrangements would provide greater assurance that medication was managed safely and consistently, supporting children's health, safety and wellbeing.

While individual children's risk assessments were in place, formal risk assessments for the service had not been developed. Staff completed daily environmental risk checks; however, these did not provide a comprehensive record of potential risks, control measures or review processes. We discussed the importance of developing clear, up-to-date risk assessments to support children's health, safety and wellbeing and ensure a consistent approach to identifying, managing and reviewing risks across the service. Strengthening risk assessment processes would provide greater assurance that children are cared for in a safe, well-managed environment and support staff to minimise identified risks effectively. (See area for Improvement 2).

The service had an induction checklist in place; however, some records were incomplete, reducing assurance that all staff had fully understood key responsibilities. We discussed strengthening oversight of the induction process and making use of national induction resource. A training programme, Professional Review and Development process (PRD) and allocated leadership roles supported staff learning and reflection. These arrangements provided opportunities for staff to contribute to improvement activities and develop their practice to support positive outcomes for children and families.

Staff meetings took place regularly and provided opportunities for staff to reflect on practice and share information. This supported effective communication and showed staff worked well as a team to support outcomes for children.

Areas for improvement

1. To support continuous improvement, the provider should strengthen quality assurance processes to ensure practice is regularly monitored, evaluated and improved to improve outcomes.

This should include, but is not limited to, the monitoring of medication, personal plans and policies and procedures.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes." (HSCS 4.19).

2. To ensure children's safety and wellbeing, the provider should ensure risk assessments are created, reviewed and updated.

This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring all indoor and outdoor environments, outings, activities, equipment and individual support needs are appropriately risk assessed, monitored and reviewed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is secure and safe." (HSCS 5.19).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Play 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 played confidently throughout the service and were actively engaged with peers and staff. Adults supported and extended learning through responsive interactions and meaningful play experiences. Outdoors, children accessed a range of resources, including loose parts, water and mark-making opportunities, which encouraged curiosity, creativity and independence. Children demonstrated problem solving and early scientific thinking as they transported water, mixed materials and explored cause and effect.

Indoors, children built on previous learning as they explored colour mixing using leaves and developed problem solving skills through their play. Overall, children were confident, engaged learners who were developing skills across a range of curriculum areas.

Almost all staff demonstrated warm, nurturing and caring interactions with children. They made good use of eye contact, positioned themselves at children's level and responded sensitively to individual needs. Most parents shared that they strongly agree that their child has a good relationship with staff. Staff offered reassurance when required, and engaged positively with children throughout the day, helping children to feel secure, valued and confident in their relationships. Overall, interactions contributed to a caring and supportive environment where children felt respected, listened to and supported to thrive.

Children were engaged in their play both indoors and outdoors, and demonstrated enjoyment and involvement in their chosen experiences. We discussed the need to review staff deployment arrangements when increased numbers of children wished to access the outdoor environment. This would help ensure children could continue to make meaningful choices about where they play and learn throughout the day.

Planning was in place and included both child-led and adult-led experiences. Staff used Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to inform planning and were beginning to consider the use of developmental milestones to support children's progress. Floor books captured children's learning and experiences through photographs, drawings and children's own comments, helping to make learning visible. This supported staff to reflect on children's interests and achievements, and informed the planning of meaningful learning experiences that responded to children's needs and interests.

Children had individual learning folders, and the service were moving to paper-based journals to record children's progress and development. Staff and parents worked together to identify individual targets for children, supporting a shared approach to monitoring progress. Observations captured children's voices and next steps, helping to ensure learning experiences were responsive to children's interests, strengths and development needs. We found some inconsistencies in the frequency of observations across journals. Improving consistency would provide a clearer picture of children's progress over time and strengthen planning for learning. As a result, children would benefit from more effective monitoring and support for their ongoing learning and development.

Group time experiences supported children's literacy, communication and listening skills. Children engaged in stories, songs and rhymes, for example, "We are going on a bear hunt." Staff promoted discussion and offered choices to support engagement. However, group experiences were not always responsive to individual children's needs and interests, with some children finding it difficult to remain engaged during longer group times. As a result, opportunities to maximise participation and involvement for all children were not consistently achieved.

Children's achievements outwith the service were recognised and celebrated helping to promote a sense of pride, belonging and self-esteem. Children's artwork and creations were displayed, for example, model elephants of the Keeping Children safe campaign, drawings and paintings. This helped children feel respected and included.

Tracking and monitoring processes had previously been in place; however, these were not being used at the time of the inspection. The service had access to training opportunities to support the development of robust tracking and monitoring arrangements. This would help identify patterns in children's learning, support early intervention where needed, and provide greater assurance that all children were making appropriate progress and receiving support to meet their individual needs.

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 experienced warm, nurturing care that promoted their wellbeing. Parents commented, "I feel the staff are very approachable and if I have any concerns or things to pass on about my child, they are great with making me feel heard", while others shared, "All staff members are great and really engaged with the children and they appear to be genuinely excited to see the little ones get there each morning." Children spoke positively about their experiences at nursery and the relationships they had developed with staff and peers. When asked what they liked about the service, children said, "I like playing with friends" and "I like colouring." As a result, children were happy, settled and confident, and benefited from positive relationships that supported their wellbeing, engagement and enjoyment.

Lunchtimes were busy and, at times, unsettled for some children. Children spent extended periods seated and several became restless, reducing their engagement in the mealtime experience. Opportunities for meaningful interactions and conversations between staff and children were limited. Children were, however, supported to develop independence through opportunities to pour their own drinks, serve vegetables and clear away after meals. Some children remained seated for lengthy periods during lunch and subsequent group activities, resulting in reduced engagement and signs of restlessness. We discussed reviewing the organisation, pace and flow of lunchtime routines to create a calmer, more sociable experience that better promotes children's wellbeing, participation and learning.

Staff knew children well and had strategies in place to support their individual needs, including 'What Matters to Me' plans and individual risk assessments, where required. Families completed a 'What Matters to Me' document when their child started at the service, which helped staff gather information about children's preferences, routines and support needs. We found inconsistencies in the records sampled, including variations in the quality of information recorded and the frequency of reviews. We discussed the importance of ensuring these plans are completed consistently and reviewed regularly to reflect children's current needs and circumstances. Strengthening these processes would help ensure children's care and support remain personalised, responsive and informed by up-to-date information from families.

Wellbeing indicator resources had been developed in partnership with a local community group and adapted to reflect the local context. Scottish wildlife characters, such as 'Safe Sammy Seagull', were used effectively to help children recognise and discuss risks within their environment. As a result, children developed their understanding of safety and made informed choices during play. This engaging approach helped children develop a stronger understanding of wellbeing and encouraged them to discuss how they could support their own wellbeing and that of others. The project also strengthened community connections and supported children's confidence and communication skills through collaborative learning with older pupils.

Transitions were planned and tailored to meet children's individual needs, including home visits before they started at the service. A range of well-considered approaches supported children and families during periods of change, including personalised Primary 1 booklets, containing photographs, buddy information and transition newsletters. Parents spoke positively about these arrangements, describing them as, "Brilliant, reassuring", "Very informative" and "Very welcoming." Companion dolls, knitted by members of the local community, were also used to support children as they moved on to Primary 1. These approaches helped children and families feel informed, included and emotionally supported, supporting children to feel secure and confident during their transition to school.

Parents were involved in the life of the service through a range of engagement opportunities. These included stay-and-play sessions, where children's learning journals were available to view and discuss, Big Chef Little Chef experiences, and regular newsletters. One staff member commented, "As a service provider to children and families, I feel we have built strong bonds with children and families, not only within the nursery but in the wider community." Some families told us they would like more opportunities to be involved in the service and receive regular updates. While a range of engagement opportunities were available, further strengthening communication and family involvement would help enhance partnerships between home and nursery. Building on these positive foundations would support even stronger partnerships between home and nursery, helping parents to contribute to and support their child's learning and development.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.scot

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.