California Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Main Street
California
Falkirk
FK1 2BW

Telephone: 01324 506 740

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 April 2026

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003043627

About the service

California Primary School Nursery is a daycare of children service which is provided by Falkirk Council. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is part of California Primary School in Falkirk and is located within the school grounds. Children and families enter the service through a designated entry area. The environment includes a spacious playroom, a fully enclosed outdoor area, and children's toilets situated directly off the main playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 April 2026 between 09:15 and 16:30, and 28 April 2026 between 08:30 and 11:30. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children and spoke to two of their family members
- received three completed questionnaires from families and one from staff
- 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 Nurturing care and support.

Key messages

- Children were confident, curious and having fun.
- Staff had a strong understanding of children, their families and the local community.
- Children benefitted from warm and nurturing care.
- Effective personal planning supported children's overall wellbeing.
- Considering the views of all stakeholders could further support self-evaluation.
- The service should review and improve areas within the nursery environment.
- Policies and procedures for the use of digital devices should be reviewed to strengthen safeguarding and data protection.

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

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 vision, values and aims of the service were being reviewed to ensure they continued to reflect high aspirations for children, families, and the wider community. Leaders were considering meaningful ways to gather the views of everyone involved in the service. This demonstrated a thoughtful and inclusive approach to understanding what mattered most when supporting children and their families.

The senior leadership team used evidence and data well to guide their decisions and drive improvements. For example, they identified numeracy as a key priority in the nursery improvement plan. As a result, the staff team carried out an audit of the environment and resources, alongside targeted staff training. These actions showed a clear and focused approach to strengthening practice in this area.

Systems to support self-evaluation and quality assurance were in place and contributed to a consistent approach across the setting. Regular staff meetings were used effectively to reflect on practice, share information and maintain shared expectations. However, there was limited evidence of children and families involvement in wider self-evaluation processes. The team were exploring ways to gather feedback from families, including through parent events, to support improvement planning. Placing greater emphasis on the views of all stakeholders would more clearly evidence their role in shaping future development priorities.

Quality assurance processes supported consistency and ongoing improvement across the setting. The quality assurance calendar clearly outlined expectations throughout the year and provided staff with an organised overview of monitoring and evaluation activities. To further strengthen these systems, we discussed more fully including the children's environment. This is referenced later in the "Nurturing care and support" section of this report. Enhancing environmental audits will help ensure all areas consistently reflect high quality standards.

Policies and procedures were in place and contributed to the ongoing development of the service. Whilst the service had access to digital devices, staff were using their own personal mobile devices to record, store and share children's learning. We discussed with leaders the need to develop more robust policies that clearly outline procedures staff must follow when using digital devices. These should include how children's learning and photographs are recorded, stored and shared with families through online apps and consider safeguarding and data protection (see area for improvement 1).

The leadership team understood the importance of maintaining appropriate staffing levels to meet the needs of children. Children and families benefitted from a stable and consistent staff team, with some staff having worked in the setting for a significant period.

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and ensure their rights and GDPR requirements are fully upheld, leaders should develop and implement robust policies for the safe use of digital devices. These should clearly outline the

procedures staff must follow when using digital devices. They should also include, but are not limited to, how staff record, store and share children's learning and photographs with families.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

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

Children were actively engaged in their play and clearly enjoyed taking part in a range of activities indoors and outdoors. Staff knew children very well, and their understanding of how children learn had a positive impact on the quality of children's experiences. In most cases, staff recognised and responded effectively to children's needs and interests, helping to make play enjoyable. As a result, children were confident, curious and having fun.

The environment enabled children to move freely across the setting, supporting their independence and choice in play. The staff team should continue to develop both the indoor and outdoor areas to create even more opportunities for wonder, curiosity and imagination. Strengthening these spaces would further support children to make informed choices about their play and learning within a more challenging and enabling environment.

Planning and assessment approaches were child-centred and effectively supported individual needs, learning and development. Staff used careful observations of children's play, interests, and needs to inform both responsive and planned learning experiences. Children's next steps in learning were identified through 'Focus Child' weeks, and in partnership with families. In one example, staff worked with parents to agree alternative next steps, demonstrating how well staff knew children and planned to meet their needs. This ensured children were offered meaningful, developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn, play and make progress at a pace that suited them.

Staff were warm and caring in their interactions with children. We observed children forming positive friendships, with staff encouraging them to help and support each other. This helped to create a strong sense of belonging and connection within the setting. One child told us they liked, "drawing, playing with my friends and being outside."

Most staff used skilled questioning to offer developmentally appropriate challenge, which helped extend children's thinking and deepen their understanding. However, at times some staff were more task focused and mainly supervising children. As a result, there were occasions where opportunities to extend children's thinking and enrich their learning were missed.

Children are supported to achieve 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.

Nurturing care and support
Children benefitted from warm and nurturing care that supported their overall wellbeing. Staff had a strong understanding of children, their families and the local community, which enabled them to build positive and trusting relationships. This contributed to a consistent approach to meeting children's needs and helped them feel happy and confident.

Families spoke highly of the staff team, describing them as friendly, caring and welcoming. One family commented, "The nursery really know every child in their care and have built really good relationships with each child."

Transitions were carefully planned to ensure children experienced continuity and felt secure. The service recognised the importance of supporting changes in children's daily experiences, whether they were starting nursery, moving on to school or adjusting to different parts of their day or week. Consistent relationships helped ensure these moves were smooth and minimised disruption to children's care and learning. When children needed additional support, staff developed enhanced plans that provided well-coordinated and effective support for them and their families.

Care routines were individualised and delivered with compassion and kindness. Most staff were attuned to children's verbal and non verbal cues, responding sensitively throughout the day. Daily experiences such as mealtimes and toileting were recognised as opportunities to promote children's independence and emotional regulation. These routines were calm, unhurried and sensitively supported.

Staff demonstrated a sensitive and respectful approach to personal care, consistently upholding children's privacy and dignity. To further strengthen practice, there is an opportunity to improve storage within the nappy changing area so that it aligns with current guidance and supports high quality infection prevention and control (IPC) (see area for improvement 1).

Children's overall wellbeing was well supported through effective personal planning. Plans were child centred and created with children, families and other professionals when needed. They were reviewed regularly to keep them relevant and meaningful. This approach ensured children's rights were respected and families felt included and listened to.

The service recognised the importance of positive connections and worked well to build and maintain supportive relationships with families. Settling-in visits provided a starting point, giving families opportunities to become familiar with the environment and staff. Families were warmly welcomed into the setting daily, which allowed them to share their child's experiences and speak with staff. Digital tools such as Dojo were used effectively to share updates, learning and reminders. Family events, such as afternoon tea and Easter activities, offered further opportunities for families to engage. Staff were regularly reviewing and considering ways to make good use of these events to gather feedback. These approaches helped families feel involved and valued, strengthening partnerships that support children's learning and wellbeing.

Areas for improvement

1. To continue promoting a safe, clean, and well maintained environment, the service should review and enhance the storage facilities within the nappy changing area. This will help ensure the space aligns with current best practice guidance and supports effective infection prevention and control (IPC). The service

should also consider how this area can be further developed to create a calm and nurturing space for children.

This is to ensure I experience a high quality environment and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state, 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.'(HSCS 5.24) and 'My environment is safe and secure.'(HSCS 5.19).

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	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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