St. John's Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Morrison Avenue
Stevenston
KA20 4HH

Telephone: 01294 464 557

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 June 2026

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003044468

About the service

St. John's Primary School Nursery Class is located within St. John's Primary School in Stevenston, North Ayrshire. The service is provided by North Ayrshire Council and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children aged three years and over.

This service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 01 April 2011.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 02 and 03 June 2026, between 09:00 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by tone inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

Spoke with the management team
Spoke with staff
Observed practice and daily life.
Reviewed documents.
Received feedback from five parents/carers.

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

- Children benefited from a well-led and nurturing environment, where strong leadership, shared values, and positive relationships supported feelings of safety, inclusion, and respect.

- Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were established and supported improvement. Further strengthening would enhance consistency and more clearly demonstrate impact on outcomes for children.

- Children were happy, confident learners who were actively engaged in meaningful play.

- Inclusive practice and strong partnerships with families meant children received the right support at the right time, helping them to feel secure, develop independence and achieve positive outcomes.

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

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 benefitted from a service that was well led and managed. A warm and welcoming ethos supported children and families to feel nurtured, respected and secure. The management team were open to feedback and demonstrated capacity to improve. They acted promptly on suggestions and made changes. This showed commitment to providing a quality service for children, staff and families.

The vision and values were clearly in place and displayed, helping children, families and staff share an understanding of the setting's ethos. They had been recently reviewed with a new staff member, supporting inclusion, shared ownership and a strong team approach. In practice, staff consistently demonstrated these values through respectful interactions and rights respecting language, for example encouraging children to "use your eyes to be safe," and supporting teamwork through activities like building an obstacle course together. Plans were in place to revisit the values in August with greater involvement from children and families, showing a commitment to continuous improvement. This could help ensure that families continue to receive a service that is reflective of their aspirations and needs.

Staff were actively involved in improvement planning and evaluating the service using the Care Inspectorate's shared framework, "A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: early learning and childcare." This supported reflective practice and promoted a collaborative approach to continuous improvement. Through this, staff and the management team successfully identified key strengths and areas for development, including plans to further enhance family engagement through targeted PEEP Learning Together sessions. Children's views were influencing practice; for example, staff responding to requests such as the provision of resources demonstrated that children were listened to and their preferences valued. Parental feedback was gathered through questionnaires and informal opportunities, such as stay-and-play sessions, supporting ongoing engagement with families. While self-evaluation processes were established and staff were engaged, there were opportunities to strengthen consistency and focus on outcomes. Further development of approaches would support more effective tracking of progress and help to demonstrate the impact of improvements over time.

A range of quality assurance processes had been effectively implemented, including lunch audits, personal learning plan reviews, staff observations, and planning evaluations, providing a helpful overview of practice across the setting. These approaches were beginning to support reflection and improvement; however, their impact on outcomes for children was not always clearly defined or evidenced. While actions were identified, such as enhancing individualised comments on support and challenge, the evidence of follow through or review was not always recorded.. Developing the structure of quality assurance processes would support greater consistency, particularly by clearly outlining focus areas and identifying how impact will be measured.

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 happy, engaged and actively involved in their play. They demonstrated enjoyment through sustained engagement in activities such as dressing up in school uniforms and participating in board games with friends. These experiences supported social interaction, imagination and turn-taking skills, with children appearing confident in initiating and leading their play.

The setting provided meaningful opportunities for children to develop curiosity, gross motor skills and early problem-solving, particularly through physical play such as jumping and balancing. However, there were occasions where children were required to wait for staff presence at particular areas, including the sensory room and the outdoor play equipment. This resulted in some missed opportunities in children's learning. We discussed this with the manager who advised that the outdoor play equipment example was due to new equipment and supporting children to use this safely. We asked the manager to consider the benefits to children in terms of managing and assessing their own risk. The approach to risk could be further developed by embedding risk-benefit principles, allowing children to build resilience and enhance their decision-making skills.

The environment was well resourced, with a range of accessible materials enabling children to make independent choices in their play. To further enhance learning, opportunities for incorporating real-life and authentic resources could be increased. For example, the addition of further resources and mud to the mud kitchen would support sensory exploration, creativity and real-world learning. The addition of natural materials, recipes, utensils and appropriately supervised use of tools, including child-safe knives, would support life skills development and deepen play contexts.

Children benefited from a range of opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and digital skills through play. Staff demonstrated a clear commitment to improvement, with lead roles such as the literacy champion supporting a consistent focus on key areas of learning. These approaches had begun to strengthen practice and provide a more structured focus on outcomes for children. As practice continues to develop, further enhancing how the impact of these roles is monitored and evaluated will support a clearer understanding of how they are positively influencing children's progress and achievements.

Planning approaches demonstrated a positive balance of responsive and intentional experiences, with children's voices clearly influencing learning. Staff were beginning to consider the breadth and depth of children's experiences, with some examples of planning that reflected individual interests and needs, including where parental contributions had meaningfully shaped learning. At times, it was difficult to identify next steps linked to children's developmental progress, limiting the ability to clearly track and support progression in skills over time. As this continues to develop, further strengthening evaluations to focus more clearly on the skills children are developing, the progress they are making and their next steps will support a more consistent approach across the team.

The setting demonstrated some community engagement, although this had reduced. Staff reported that staffing levels had impacted the frequency of outings and wider experiences.

This has the potential to limit children's opportunities to connect with and learn from their local community. The manager agreed to monitor this.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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.

Children experienced high-quality, nurturing care and support. Staff interactions were warm, respectful of children's rights and responsive. This contributed to children feeling safe, secure and confident. This was demonstrated through children seeking out staff for reassurance, comfort and shared experiences, such as approaching them for cuddles, sitting on their knee or inviting them into their play. These interactions indicated that children had developed trusting and meaningful attachments with staff, supporting their emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging. One parent told us: "The staff are very nurturing and kind to my children. They know my children very well and regularly update me with information about them, in terms of them academically and their health and wellbeing."

Staff and children across the service showed respectful, positive relationships. Staff worked well together as a team, supporting each other and providing a consistent approach for children. This helped children feel safe and secure. The senior management team were visible, approachable and involved in the day-to-day life of the setting. They spent time with both staff and children, which helped build strong relationships and supported a calm, nurturing atmosphere throughout the service.

All children had personal plans in place that clearly reflected their individual health, wellbeing and learning needs. These plans were regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with parents, ensuring that care and support remained responsive and inclusive. One parent told us: "The staff keeps us up to date with what our child has been doing regularly at pick up/ drop off and they also arrange meetings quarterly to go through their personal plan more in depth." Where children had identified additional support needs, these were very well understood and effectively planned for. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusive practice, working collaboratively with families and external agencies to ensure a coordinated approach. This supported continuity between home and the setting, enabling staff to meet children's needs effectively, ensuring they received care and support that was right for them.

Transitions were very well planned and implemented in a sensitive, child-centred manner. Children were supported to feel confident and prepared for change through meaningful experiences such as visits to their future school, meeting the head teacher and class teacher, and engaging with school lunch routines. In addition, buddy systems and familiarisation opportunities within both nursery and school environments helped to build relationships. These approaches ensured that children experienced smooth, positive transitions, supporting their emotional wellbeing and readiness for the next stage of learning.

Mealtimes were generally calm, social and unhurried, supporting children to enjoy positive experiences. On the first day of inspection, some improvements were discussed with the management team, for example more effective supervision at lunch tables. They responded effectively to feedback, and improvements observed day two of inspection demonstrated their capacity for reflection and responsive practice. Adjustments led to a more organised and relaxed mealtime experience, with increased focus on hygiene, safety and social interaction.

Children were supported to make choices, and opportunities for independence, such as collecting their own plates and cutlery were encouraged. Food provided was nutritious and aligned with current best practice guidance: 'Setting the table' supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Medication procedures were in place and generally well-managed, supporting children's health needs safely. Staff ensured appropriate checks, including first-dose confirmation. While some minor gaps were identified in recording, these did not impact on children's safety.

Staff demonstrated awareness of individual medical needs, including recognising signs and symptoms and ensuring medication labels were consistent with records.

Families were actively involved in their child's care and learning. The service provided a wide range of inclusive opportunities for engagement, such as stay-and-play sessions, Bookbug visits to the library, and the use of home-link bags tailored to children's interests and developmental targets. One parent told us: "My husband and I have also attended a range of stay and plays that have been arranged, along with visits to the library for BookBug." Communication with families was strong and effective, utilising a variety of methods including newsletters, questionnaires, social media and personal learning plan meetings. This ensured that families felt informed, valued and able to contribute meaningfully to their child's experiences and outcomes.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

The service should review the medications procedure to ensure there is a clear policy and guidelines on the use, storage and administration of medication and that, if needed, staff are suitably trained to carry these out.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state:

'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 10 May 2019.

Action taken since then

Medication recording systems and policies had been updated. Auditing systems ensured that documentation was completed correctly and timeously. This supported staff in keeping children safe. As a result, this area for improvement has been met.

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	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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