Gordon Primary School Nursery - Gordon Day Care of Children

Gordon Primary School
Gordon
TD3 6LW

Telephone: 01573 410 245

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 May 2025

Service provided by:
Scottish Borders Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001976

Service no:
CS2003048156

About the service

Gordon Primary School Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 24 children aged from 2 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. Of those no more than 5 are aged 2 to under 3 years.

The nursery is part of the primary school in the small rural town of Gordon in the Scottish Borders. Children have access to a playroom, toilets, cloakroom and garden play space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 May 2025 between 9:30 and 15:45. The 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 information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children during their play
- reviewed comments made by parents
- spoke with a staff member
- observed staff practice and the experiences of children
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children experienced sensitive, warm and nurturing support from kind and caring staff who knew them well.

- A welcoming environment promoted an ethos of respect where positive relationships with parents supported partnership working.

- Staff were motivated and responsive to meeting the needs of children and worked well with each other.

- Children were welcomed into the wider school community, this supported a smooth transition to school, supporting children to feel included.

- Staff deployment had been reviewed and was beginning to meet children's needs to ensure high-quality experiences for children.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning? 4 - Good

We evaluated different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children that clearly outweighed the areas for improvement

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and Support

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Children experienced warm, consistent and responsive care that fostered their wellbeing. They were sensitively cared for and helped to express their needs. Staff were nurturing, comforting and gentle in their interactions with children. Parent commented "My child has thrived in this nursery, the team are nurturing and clearly care about what they do every day" and "The staff are very caring and nurturing".

Staff had worked hard to create a lunch time that was a nurturing and calm experience for children. Overall, mealtimes were well organised, unhurried and supportive of children's needs. Staff sat and ate with children, promoting conversation and providing effective supervision to keep them safe. Children were encouraged to be independent and benefited from opportunities to self-serve side dishes, pour drinks and clear away dishes. Children's allergies and food preferences were well catered for through staff awareness of any allergies or dietary requirements. Children had access to fresh water throughout the day and children were encouraged to stay hydrated. This helped keep children safe and well. Parents commented "My child doesn't eat much but is always offered everything everyone else gets even when they know they won't eat it" and "My child gets healthy snack and enjoys school lunches a lot".

Children's wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Plans included individualised information on children's needs and how these would be met. Staff spoke knowledgably and confidently about children's individual care needs and what they did to support them. We saw staff responding to children and offering kindness, reassurance and cuddles. As a result, individual children experienced care and support that was right for them. Individual support plans were in place, where required, which identified specific strategies of support for children. Parents all strongly agreed that they were included in reviewing and updating the personal plan. One stated "Care plans are always reviewed often, and if something needs added or removed it's done straight away and gone over with me as a parent at the time". Moving forward, staff should continue to review the personal plans to ensure consistency of the information recorded.

Children were a part of the whole school community and joined in with different activities, for example, assemblies, forest Fridays and French classes. This helped children to become familiar with the building, other people and supported their transition into school. A parent commented "being connected to the primary school my child has opportunities to join in with things there which they love" and a staff member commented "Children using this service are happy & content in their learning & this is noticed when they transition to P1".

Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs. Allergies and intolerances were displayed. Accidents and incidents were recorded and parents appropriately informed. We suggested that staff audit accidents and incidents to ensure children were kept safe. Medication was stored appropriately and

paperwork contained information around children's signs and symptoms. Medication was audited and expiry dates were recorded.

Child protection policy and procedures were in place. Staff were knowledgeable about signs and symptoms around safeguarding and were confident in reporting concerns to the designated child protection officer. We shared guidance with the senior leadership team around notifications. This would ensure the Care Inspectorate were aware of incidents within the service and could provide appropriate support if required or identify any action needed to keep children safe.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were happy and engaged in various play and learning opportunities. They enjoyed a range of resources and positive interactions with staff. However, children were not always involved in sustained play and learning opportunities especially later in the session. Staff should review the routine of the day to ensure children are provided with opportunities for spontaneous, self-directed play and could access suitable resources to facilitate exploration, problem solving and investigation.

Staff used intentional and responsive planning that was beginning to support children's emerging interests, to enhance and extend their learning. Children's comments and ideas were evidenced within these, which demonstrated their voice was included within the planning process. Planning should continue to be developed to make consistent links to personal learning journals and planning for individual needs.

Play experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Children had opportunities to listen to stories and sing songs. A variety of mark making tools supported children's emerging writing skills. The use of environmental print, such as newspapers, labels and signs, provided opportunities for children to recognise and become familiar with letters. Mathematical language was used as children and staff played games, counted, compared and measured. Parents commented "Gordon have a wide range of activities for all the children and of all abilities, they have an amazing wildlife garden, an amazing range of indoor and outdoor toys as well".

Learning journals were available though a digital platform. They captured children's individual achievements, progress and contained photographs, small video's, observations along with identified next steps. This demonstrated the breadth of learning experiences available for children. However, staff were identifying too many next steps for children, which they found difficult to manage. The Local Authority were supporting staff to focus on identifying significant learning for each child, which would help children become successful learners.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a welcoming, homely and comfortable setting. The playroom was naturally lit and well-ventilated. Wall displays were maintained and showed photographs of children and their artwork. Overall,

the setting gave children the message that they belonged. A parent commented "It is a lovely nursery room and outdoor space which is constantly being worked on and maintained by staff".

The indoor environment had developmentally appropriate spaces. Children could independently access a range of toys and resources for play. Core resources such as water, sand and dough were available for all ages. Resources reflected children's interests at that time.

The outdoor environment was a lovely space. Children were confident and having fun outside. The mud kitchen was a well-used area, the reading nook and some environmental print was providing children with literacy opportunities. Staff recognised the importance of children having regular access to outdoor play to support both their physical and mental wellbeing. The children also took part in forest Friday, where they visited the woods near the school. At times, free flow indoor/outdoor play was not possible due to staffing. However, staff deployment had been reviewed by the Local Authority and an additional part time staff member was now employed. This helped support children's wellbeing and learning needs. Parents commented "Excellent nursery garden and love that they go to wildlife garden on school grounds every Friday morning" and "There is a wide range of outdoor stuff for them, the bikes, climbing, balancing on stilts, dancing, splashing in puddles, mud kitchen, the wild life garden brings even more opportunities than just the nursery garden".

During the previous inspection we asked the service to de-clutter the playroom and staff had started this process. However, further work was needed to ensure children have access to a tidy and clutter free environment. This would ensure children were not overwhelmed with the level of choice but support them to develop their own play and become confident learners.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place to reduce infection spread, such as handwashing, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and general cleaning. Toilets and nappy changing areas were generally maintained to reduce the risk of infection. We have asked staff to ensure the kitchen area remains clutter free. The service were aware that some resources were worn and had a plan in place for these to be replaced.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

There had been changes in the leadership of the setting in the last year, staff stated that they were positive about the change and felt supported. The management team were visible in the setting and were known to staff and children. Staff commented "Line manager is very compassionate and understanding" and "Leaders are exceptionally supportive and considered" however one staff member did state that "More could be done to support us for example, regular formal chats about how we really feel".

There were a number of different opportunities for parents and carers to provide feedback including questionnaires, stay and play sessions and personal plan reviews. Families regularly supported activities within the playroom and a parent stated "Invited in each session or term to do cooking and play activities with the children". Parents were welcomed daily into the service and had the opportunity to discuss their child's care, play and learning. They told us that "Teachers are always there morning and at pick up times to talk to you about anything" and "Gordon nursery is very welcoming". This meant that families were

confident expressing their ideas and suggestions and these were being used to influence change within the setting.

Self evaluation was established and based on observations, action plans from previous inspection and the improvement plan. We could see that these were being reviewed regularly and were beginning to make an impact on outcomes for children. Improvements had been made to the lunch time experience and information recorded within personal plans. Feedback from children and families was included. The senior leadership team were working together to make changes within realistic timescales and support staff along the way.

Staff met regularly to reflect on their work and self-evaluation. They also used informal opportunities to talk about planning and any changes that were required. Staff felt confident about voicing their opinions and were being supported to try new ideas. Further opportunities should be provided for staff to discuss and reflect on best practice documents and begin to make changes based on these. For example, using environmental audits and "Realising the Ambition" would support staff to consider the environment and make the relevant changes.

Parents are very happy with the service provided and commented "Excellent staff, continuity of care, lovely facilities and resources. Small rural setting which is ideal for my family needs" and "The service is literally the best".

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children were being cared for by a warm, caring and professional staff team. Staff engaged well with the inspection process and worked with us openly and honestly. Staff told us that they welcomed senior staff taking the time to speak to them.

Staff were deployed appropriately throughout the day and this meant that there were the right number of staff available to support most children's needs. Staff observed what was happening in the setting and moved around to ensure that they were in the right place to support children, for example by going outside, playing games and reading stories. The area for improvement around staff deployment had been met through the employment of an additional staff member. They provide support for part of the week. Children sought reassurance from staff who understood their needs, nurtured them and provided appropriate support throughout the day. This helped children feel secure, valued and trust the adults caring for them.

Busier times of the day, including lunchtimes and arriving/leaving the nursery, were well managed. Good communication at these times ensured that all staff knew where each other was and how many children they had. Verbal handovers with parents and carers at the end of the day were positive with meaningful information shared.

Parents told us "I am confident that the team working there will always have the best interest of the children at the forefront of what they do" and "Overall Gordon Primary school nursery is an excellent facility with brilliant staff".

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

To support all children to experience consistent, quality interactions, the provider should ensure that staff deployment takes into consideration the space, routines and individual needs of children. Staffing levels should support and contribute to children's safety, wellbeing and overall early learning experience.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 16 September 2024.

Action taken since then

An additional staff member was employed in the service, which meant children's routines and wellbeing needs were supported.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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