St. Peter's Primary School Nursery - Galashiels
Day Care of Children

Parsonage Road
Galashiels
TD1 3DS

Telephone: 01896 753 185

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 September 2026

Service provided by:
Scottish Borders Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001976

Service no:
CS2003049470

About the service

St. Peter's Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a daycare service for up to 54 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery operated from St Peter's Primary School, Galashiels, and included a cloakroom and two playrooms, one of which provided a dedicated dining area. Children benefited from access to the school gym hall, library and outdoor garden, enhancing opportunities for active play, learning and exploration.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 September 2026 between 09:00 and 16:30 and 29 September 2026 between 08:00 and 16:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 29 September 2026. 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received feedback from seven families of children who attend the service
- spoke with four families in person
- 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, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Values of kindness, effort and respect were embedded in children's learning and relationships.
- A clear improvement plan supported focused progress and positive outcomes for children and families.
- Continue to strengthen evidence of the impact of improvements and interventions on outcomes for children.
- Continue to develop systems that demonstrate how the views of children, families and staff influence decision-making and improvement.
- Children benefited from engaging, literacy-rich experiences that promoted a love of reading and learning.
- Warm, nurturing relationships helped children feel safe, valued and confident.

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

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.

The values of kindness, effort and respect were reflected in children's play, learning and interactions. Staff consistently promoted these values throughout the day, and children were supported to make meaningful connections to them through songs, discussions and positive reinforcement. As a result, children demonstrated these values in their relationships with others and in their approach to learning.

The improvement plan was well developed and demonstrated a clear rationale for the priorities identified. Planned actions were specific, measurable and focused on improving outcomes for children and families. This provided staff with a strong framework for evaluating progress and measuring the impact of changes over time. While positive progress had been made over the previous year, opportunities remained to strengthen how the impact of improvements was evidenced. This would help demonstrate the difference improvements were making to outcomes for children and families and support future improvement planning.

The setting gathered the views of children and families through questionnaires and parent council meetings. One parent shared, "My child and I are involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Staff are always looking for feedback and advice on any changes that can be made." Another added, "Staff are friendly, approachable and available to listen to any suggestions you may have to share." While staff used feedback to inform improvements, opportunities remained to communicate more clearly the changes made in response. This would help families understand how their views influenced decision-making and service improvement.

A quality assurance calendar was in place and provided a structured approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. This included professional learning opportunities, team meetings, monitoring activities and reflective practice. As a result, staff were supported to evaluate practice and maintain a focus on positive outcomes for children and families. Staff shared that they had previously held leadership responsibilities and were now working collectively to develop literacy across the setting. This focused approach had supported greater consistency and depth within this area. Moving forward, consideration should be given to how the impact of developments within health and wellbeing and numeracy will be measured and sustained.

Systems were in place to monitor learning environments through audits and checklists, particularly within literacy. To strengthen self-evaluation further, staff should continue to revisit previous actions and priorities when identifying future developments. This would help demonstrate what changes had been made, what resources and experiences had been introduced, and the impact these had on children's learning and engagement.

We observed effective monitoring of lunchtime experiences to evaluate children's experiences and identify areas for improvement. Extending this approach to areas such as outdoor play, learning environments and interactions would strengthen self-evaluation. We discussed using the challenge questions within the

Quality Improvement Framework to support this work and help identify improvements that made the greatest difference to children's outcomes.

Staff told us they were mentored by senior staff and received an induction that covered key policies and nursery procedures. Strengthening the induction programme to include opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice over time would provide assurance that roles and responsibilities were well understood. We signposted the National Induction Resource to support this.

Staff shared that they felt well supported in their roles. We suggested using the PDR process to more clearly capture professional goals, training and development needs, and the support provided. This would help demonstrate how staff development was planned, monitored and linked to improved outcomes for children. The supportive culture and commitment to staff development provided a strong foundation for this work to continue.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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.

We observed a positive balance of child-led and adult-led experiences which supported both breadth and depth in children's learning. Children were engaged in their play and learning, demonstrating enthusiasm, curiosity and sustained concentration as they explored the opportunities available to them. As a result, children were developing confidence as learners, extending their thinking and making meaningful choices about their play and learning.

Practitioners interacted warmly with children and used questioning, commentary and language modelling effectively to extend thinking and promote learning. To strengthen practice further, practitioners should continue to reflect on questioning techniques to ensure children have sufficient time to think, respond and develop their own ideas before further prompts are given.

Provocations were used effectively to promote curiosity, creativity and inquiry. Children were encouraged to explore, investigate and solve problems, while opportunities to discuss and reflect on learning supported their developing understanding. Praise and encouragement were consistently observed from both adults and children, creating a positive learning environment where children felt confident to try new things and build on existing skills.

Children benefited from a range of loose parts experiences, including ball runs, funnels and tunnels, which promoted experimentation, creativity and early problem-solving skills. Planned experiences, such as visits to Gala Hill, provided meaningful opportunities for children to develop new skills and strengthen connections with the wider school and community. We discussed the benefits of extending free-flow access between indoor and outdoor environments to further enhance children's choice, independence and opportunities to lead their own learning throughout the day.

Children benefited from a literacy-rich environment where print, stories, singing and meaningful conversations were embedded throughout the day. Accessible reading and writing resources encouraged children to develop communication and literacy skills in purposeful ways. Story sacks, lending libraries and

book-sharing opportunities extended learning into the home and helped foster enjoyment of books and reading. A parent told us, "My child talks about visiting the school library and loves to share stories and books. They love getting story sacks and library books home to share with me too." This demonstrated the positive impact of these approaches on children's engagement with literacy.

Learning was captured digitally, providing families with regular updates about their child's experiences and progress. Families spoke positively about this approach and appreciated the opportunity to stay connected to their child's learning. Children's achievements were celebrated, and families were encouraged to share successes and experiences from home. Next steps were shared with families, helping to create a consistent approach between home and nursery and supporting improved outcomes for children. Opportunities remained to help children revisit and reflect on their learning more regularly. Displaying photographs and learning displays at children's eye level, alongside children's reflections, would strengthen their ownership of learning and make progress more visible over time.

Tracking systems were beginning to capture children's progress across health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Staff used this information to inform next steps and support continued progress. Support and challenge groups had been introduced to meet children's individual needs, with staff beginning to record the strategies used. We discussed how further evaluation of interventions would help demonstrate progress, inform future planning and provide clearer evidence of improved outcomes. This provided a positive foundation for supporting children's ongoing learning and achievement.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

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 warm, nurturing and responsive care from staff who knew them well and supported their emotional wellbeing. Positive relationships were evident throughout the setting, with children appearing secure, happy and confident in their interactions with staff, peers and families. Children were treated with kindness and respect, helping them feel valued and included.

Children were encouraged to develop independence through everyday routines and experiences. Snack and lunchtime periods provided opportunities for children to make choices, prepare food and develop self-help skills. These experiences supported confidence, responsibility and social interaction.

Children were also well supported in preparing for the transition to school. Regular visits to school spaces, including the gym hall and P1 classroom and library helped children become familiar with new environments, develop confidence and build positive relationships ahead of moving on to the next stage of their learning journey.

A range of comfortable and welcoming spaces supported children's emotional wellbeing. Sofas, cushions and outdoor reading dens provided opportunities for children to relax, rest and enjoy quieter moments throughout the day. Strategies to support emotional awareness were embedded within practice. Enhancing emotional literacy resources, visuals and planned opportunities to explore feelings would further support children to recognise emotions and develop positive coping strategies.

Children's health and wellbeing needs were supported through effective policies and risk assessments. Personal records, chronologies, medication records and regular audits helped ensure information remained accurate and up to date, including three-monthly reviews with parents. Good handwashing practices were evident, and children had access to drinking water throughout the day. These effective systems helped keep children safe, healthy and well supported.

Personal plans were reviewed regularly with families. Staff gathered valuable information about children's wellbeing, routines and individual needs. We discussed opportunities to more consistently record how parental feedback had informed actions and support strategies. While some examples were evident within children's chronologies, this was not always clearly demonstrated across records. This would strengthen evidence of how children's individual needs are being met.

Children benefited from meaningful connections within their local community. The Keeping Children Safe campaign and SIMOA the elephant provided additional opportunities for children and families to explore safety and wellbeing across nursery, home and community environments. This helped promote children's understanding of how to stay safe and supported their overall wellbeing.

Strong partnerships with families contributed positively to children's care and wellbeing. Families had daily opportunities to share information with staff and discuss their child's experiences. More formal opportunities for communication were also available. Online learning journals, photographs and observations helped families stay informed about their child's learning and development. Families we spoke with valued these updates and felt they supported meaningful involvement in their child's experiences

A parent told us, "We are encouraged to participate in regular opportunities to be involved in the nursery, such as stay-and-play sessions, breakfast mornings and local walks and trips." Staff responded to family feedback when planning these opportunities, helping to maximise participation. Families valued the care and support provided, with one parent sharing, "They are warm and caring towards my child" and another commenting, "Staff truly care about and value each child, providing nurturing, individualised support." This helped children and families develop strong, trusting relationships with staff and feel a sense of belonging within the service.

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 better support children's immediate needs, such as toileting, staff numbers should be increased to ensure that there are adequate numbers of adults available to assist and accompany children when required, as well as support the learning and activities.

National Care Standards: Standard 12.2, Confidence in Staff

This area for improvement was made on 29 August 2017.

Action taken since then

New toilets had been installed adjacent to the playroom, ensuring there were sufficient facilities for the number of children registered. Children were able to access toilets independently and promptly when needed, reducing disruption to their play and learning and supporting their wellbeing and developing independence.

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

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

0345 600 9527

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