Moorfoot Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

41 Borthwick Castle Road
North Middleton
Gorebridge
EH23 4QS

Telephone: 0131 392 1978

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 October 2026

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Service no:
CS2007157170

About the service

Moorfoot Primary School Nursery is located in the village of Moorfoot, Midlothian. The service is provided by Midlothian Council.
The setting is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 24 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. On the day of inspection 8 children were in attendance.

Children are cared for in one playroom that has direct access to a secure outdoor play area. The nursery has a playroom, toilets, kitchen area and its own entrance space. The outdoor area is accessed directly from the playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 September 2026 between 9:00 and 16:45. 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:
- spent time with children using the service
- reviewed electronic feedback from families and staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- 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

- Nurture was a clear strength, warm and caring relationships helped children feel safe, valued and emotionally secure.

- Children were confident, independent learners who actively engaged in a wide range of experiences that reflected their interests and needs.

- Outdoor learning provided meaningful opportunities for children to develop confidence, wellbeing, physical skills and an understanding of risk and safety.

- Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes supported continuous improvement and helped identify clear priorities for further development.

- All staff should take ownership of their roles and responsibilities and actively contribute to self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement to support positive outcomes for children and families.

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	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very 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 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

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.

The nursery's vision, values and aims were clearly reflected in daily practice and had recently been reviewed with staff, children and families. The focus on Learning, Inspiration, Friendship and Enjoyment (LIFE) helped create a positive ethos across the setting. Children's rights were promoted through the class charter and embedded within everyday experiences. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting children's learning and wellbeing. Children had regular opportunities to play, access fresh air, enjoy food and drink, rest when needed and make choices about their day. They were encouraged to develop independence and respect differences. As a result, children experienced a nurturing environment where they felt valued, respected and supported.

The service demonstrated a strong commitment to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Staff used the local authority self-evaluation toolkit and a floor book to record developments, reflect on practice and evidence improvements. This helped the team identify strengths, monitor progress and evaluate the impact of changes on children's experiences and outcomes. Self-evaluation had led to improvements in the indoor learning environment and literacy experiences. Priorities for the year included enhancing the outdoor environment and strengthening opportunities for children to develop numeracy and mathematical skills. Staff remained committed to professional learning and had identified areas for development, including keys to communication approaches and restrictive practice. While self-evaluation was becoming embedded, all staff should now take greater ownership of the process. This would promote a shared approach to improvement, build leadership capacity and support sustainable progress.

Leaders provided effective support and direction for the nursery. Staff spoke positively about the leadership team and described a supportive culture where they felt valued, listened to and involved in decision-making. Regular staff meetings, professional review and development meetings and ongoing professional discussions supported communication, reflection and improvement. Increased leadership oversight and opportunities for peer review would help further strengthen practice and improve outcomes for children.

Parents spoke positively about the relationships they had developed with staff. One parent described these relationships as positive, transparent and trusting. Parents valued the strong connections staff had built with their children and recognised the team's commitment to providing high-quality learning experiences. They said staff responded well to children's interests and supported their development. Families also highlighted the challenges created by staffing pressures and the impact this had on the wider service.

Robust quality assurance processes supported children's health, safety and wellbeing. Monitoring arrangements for medication, accidents, personal planning and risk assessments were well documented and regularly reviewed. To strengthen these processes further, all staff should take a more active role in quality assurance activities. This would support greater consistency and a shared understanding of expectations across the setting.

Children demonstrated a good understanding of safety through their awareness of "SIMOA" the safety elephant. They spoke confidently about how SIMOA helped keep them safe and explained that SIMOA

accompanied them on outdoor learning experiences. Children were involved in discussions about risk and safety, helping them develop an understanding of how to identify and manage risk. Risk assessments contributed to a safe and nurturing environment where children could learn and play with confidence. As a result, important safety messages were meaningful and accessible and supported children to keep themselves safe.

Staff were developing leadership skills through champion roles, enabling them to take responsibility for areas of interest and contribute to nursery improvements. Training opportunities and shared learning helped extend skills and knowledge across the team. While leadership responsibilities were becoming more distributed, staff should now take greater ownership of their roles and responsibilities. This would build confidence, strengthen leadership capacity and support continued improvement. Overall, the nursery demonstrated a clear commitment to improvement and was well placed to continue achieving positive outcomes for children and families.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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 were happy, settled and clearly enjoyed their time at nursery. They moved confidently around the environment, made choices about their play and approached staff for support when needed. As a result, children demonstrated a strong sense of belonging and security within the setting.

The nursery provided a stimulating environment that encouraged children to explore their interests, be creative and make choices about their learning. Play opportunities were well planned and supported children's engagement across a range of experiences, including construction, arts and crafts, sand, water and small world play. An interactive autumnal display enhanced the environment, reflected thoughtful attention to detail and helped children to understand seasonal changes. Children made their own play dough using a variety of ingredients, herbs and spices to create different scents and textures. Paint was presented in small jars, which enabled children to make independent choices, experiment with colour mixing and develop creativity. As a result, children were engaged, motivated and actively involved in their learning.

Staff had worked hard to create a literacy-rich environment that supported children's language and literacy development. Children enjoyed books and storytelling both indoors and outdoors. One staff member expressed an interest in reintroducing the lending library to further promote reading opportunities and family involvement. Staff had identified numeracy and mathematics as the next area for development. This demonstrated a commitment to providing children with a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities.

Outdoor learning was becoming increasingly embedded in practice. Children regularly visited local woodlands for forest school sessions. This supported them to develop their confidence, physical skills and wellbeing while exploring the natural environment. Children demonstrated a good understanding of road safety during walks and visits within the local community. Staff were enthusiastic about extending outdoor learning opportunities. Professional learning had strengthened their confidence in leading outdoor experiences and supporting challenge and risk. As this area continued to develop, staff should review arrangements for safety, shelter, hygiene and outdoor equipment to ensure children's experiences remained positive and well supported. Parents spoke very positively about woodland visits, local walks and wider

community experiences.

Warm, caring and nurturing interactions helped children feel secure, valued and included. Staff responded sensitively to children's emotional needs and provided reassurance, praise and encouragement throughout the day. Positive relationships were a clear strength of the setting. To build on this, staff should continue to develop their use of purposeful questioning and sustained interactions to extend children's curiosity, thinking and learning. The development of communication skills and questioning techniques had appropriately been identified as an area for improvement.

Children benefited from learning experiences that reflected their interests, needs and next steps. Planning was informed by observations and discussions with children, this meant their views influenced learning. Floor books and observations captured children's ideas, achievements and progress, while learning priorities were reviewed regularly and shared with families through Seesaw (digital platform). Audits of planning, observations and developmental trackers helped support high-quality learning experiences and children's progress.

Staff were becoming more confident in contributing to planning and observations. They should now take greater ownership of these processes to promote a more collaborative approach across the team. This would improve consistency, build confidence and support a shared responsibility for children's learning and development.

Parents were complimentary about the care and learning experiences provided. They valued staff's responsiveness to children's interests and highlighted activities such as planting, cooking and learning about insects. Parents also appreciated the support provided to help children build confidence and share their learning with others. A small number of parents felt communication about their child's learning and development could be more consistent. The service agreed to seek further views from parents. Sharing updates through Seesaw (digital platform) should become a shared responsibility across the staff team to provide families with regular and consistent information about their child's learning, progress and experiences.

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.

Nurture was central to the ethos of the setting and was a clear strength. Staff had a strong understanding of children's individual needs and responded with kindness, sensitivity and genuine care. Warm, trusting relationships helped children feel valued, secure and included. Staff provided comfort and reassurance when needed and celebrated achievements through meaningful praise and encouragement. As a result, children were confident, emotionally secure and well supported.

Children were encouraged to develop independence through everyday routines. They prepared snack, which involved cutting fruit and vegetables, this helped develop their confidence and self-help skills. Choice and independence were promoted as children selected their own plates, cutlery, food and drinks. Snack and lunchtime experiences were relaxed, nurturing, sociable and provided opportunities for children to develop friendships, confidence and communication skills.

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning. Plans were developed in partnership with families and reflected children's individual needs, interests and preferences. Chronologies recorded significant events that may have impacted children's wellbeing. Children requiring additional support were discussed regularly with families and relevant professionals. The introduction of a single-sheet overview provided staff with a clear summary of agreed strategies and identified next steps for supporting children's needs. To strengthen practice further, chronologies should be reviewed regularly to ensure actions, strategies and outcomes are clearly evaluated and their impact evidenced.

Parents were warmly welcomed into the setting and staff had created a positive and inclusive environment where families felt valued, respected and at ease. Parent consultations, wellbeing meetings, Seesaw (digital platform) updates and the nursery website helped keep families informed about their child's experiences and nursery life. The welcoming entrance area provided accessible information and created a positive first impression of the service.

Parents spoke positively about the care, support and learning opportunities provided. They highlighted the strong relationships children had developed with staff. Parents valued the team's commitment to supporting individual children and families. They described staff as caring, approachable and proactive. They also appreciated the support provided through partnership working and multi-agency involvement.

Most parents felt well informed about their child's experiences. They valued opportunities to communicate with staff. A small number of parents said they would like greater involvement in personal planning and more consistent communication. The service should continue to gather and respond to parental feedback. Families should also be supported to contribute to their child's learning, share their views and participate in reviewing plans. This would strengthen partnership working and help ensure all families feel informed, included and valued.

Children's health, safety and wellbeing were supported through effective recording, monitoring and information-sharing processes. Medication was stored securely, remained within expiry dates and had appropriate parental consent in place. Individual medication information sheets clearly outlined signs and symptoms. To strengthen practice further, these should be stored in line with guidance so they are readily available when needed. Accidents, incidents and allergies were recorded which meant staff had access to relevant information about children's health needs. Records were well organised and regularly reviewed to identify patterns and trends. This helped staff respond effectively to children's needs and promote their ongoing safety and wellbeing.

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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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