Loanhead Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

34 Edgefield Road
Loanhead
EH20 9DY

Telephone: 0131 392 1935

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 August 2026

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Service no:
CS2007157174

About the service

Loanhead Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service. They are registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 40 children aged from 3 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school.

The service is delivered from Loanhead Primary School and provided by Midlothian Council. It is close to local amenities and has good transport links. Children are cared for in a large playroom with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area. They also have access to a kitchen area and toilet/changing facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 July 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. On the day of the inspection, 19 children were in attendance and a further two children were attending settling-in visits with their parent/carers.

In making our evaluations of the service we:
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- spoke with the leadership team and staff
- gathered feedback from one family and three staff member's through online questionnaires
- reviewed documents
- spoke with some of the children

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 benefitted from a wide range of high-quality play and learning experiences that supported their interests, development and wellbeing.

- Good partnerships with families and an inclusive approach ensured children felt valued, respected and supported to thrive.

- The management team and staff were motivated and dedicated to providing a high quality service that supported positive outcomes for children.

- Personal plans were in place for all children, containing key information to support their health, safety and wellbeing needs. The service should consider streamlining these to reduce duplication and ensure information remains clear.

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	5 - Very 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

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.

Staff were approachable, friendly and professional throughout the inspection. They worked well together and led the inspection effectively and demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and enhancing outcomes for children. This contributed to a positive culture that supported children's wellbeing, learning and development. A staff member commented "Very committed strong team who work well together & always self evaluate daily to make sure we are doing the best job and focus on any things we can improve".

The service had a clear vision, values and aims that provided a positive foundation for practice. These were reflected in staff's kind and respectful interactions with children. This helped children feel safe, included and valued. A parent commented, "My child loves nursery and is always talking about the staff and their friends". While information about the service's vision, values and aims was not currently displayed, plans were in place to refresh this within the environment. This would support children and families to understand the service's ethos. It would also help them know what to expect and how the service supports children's care, learning and development.

Quality assurance systems were in place and the local authority self-evaluation and auditing framework's were used to support improvement. These helped monitor the quality of the service and contributed to positive outcomes for children. Some opportunities were identified to strengthen these processes further. For example, staff would benefit from increased familiarity with quality assurance information and team meetings should be consistently recorded to support communication and improvement planning. Further oversight of audits, accidents, incidents, observations and personal plans would further support reflection and continuous improvement. This would help ensure children continue to receive consistent, high-quality care and support.

Staff were encouraged to contribute ideas and share their views to support the ongoing development of the service. A reflective approach to improvement was evident, with examples of initiatives that had been developed to enhance children's experiences and support learning across the setting. The service had also delivered Zones of Regulation training across the school. Although this approach had previously been identified as being embedded within the playroom, it was not consistently evident in practice at the time of the inspection. Re-establishing it would further support children to recognise and manage their emotions and wellbeing. Overall, there was a positive culture of reflection and improvement, which helped ensure developments remained responsive to the needs of children and families. A staff member commented, "The service works well and provides a positive environment for all children. There are areas we continue to develop, including ensuring that we have enough resources to support play/learning and maintaining staffing levels to best support children's needs".

Staff wellbeing was supported through effective leadership and a positive team culture. Staff spoke positively about the support they received from the head teacher and wider team and described strong teamwork and collaboration. Professional reviews had taken place, and plans were in place to provide

protected time for staff development and learning opportunities once staffing levels were fully established. This would support professional growth and help maintain 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 settled, happy, engaged and those who were new to the nursery were supported sensitively as they settled. Children independently accessed well-organised, good-quality resources, which promoted choice, confidence and engagement in play. All areas of the playroom were well used, this supported children to follow their interests and experience a varied play environment.

Children enjoyed using the story space, which provided comfortable furnishings, age-appropriate books and puppets to support language and early literacy development. Staff were setting up the playroom following the summer break. They planned to review the range of language, literacy and numeracy resources available indoors and outdoors. The local authority environmental audit tool could support this process. These developments would further enhance children's play and learning experiences and promote early skills through play. A parent commented, "My child always tells me about the exciting things they get up to at nursery, when dropping them off, nursery areas are always well presented, with fun and interesting activities".

Interactions were responsive and meaningful, with staff engaging warmly and playfully with children throughout the day. Staff used appropriate questioning, commentary and narration to support children's learning and development. There was scope to develop this practice further. At times, some staff did not consistently sit alongside children to support and extend their learning through play. Further development in this area would help children remain engaged, promote sustained shared thinking and strengthen their communication and language skills.

Planning for play was well embedded within the setting. Staff worked on a two-week rotation within designated areas. They were responsible for planning experiences and evaluating learning opportunities. Staff adapted resources in response to children's needs and interests. Staff spoke positively about this approach and felt it supported consistency across the setting. The digital planning system enabled all staff to access and contribute to planning, with clear links evident between planning, resources and children's play experiences. While confidence in using the system varied among staff, it was being used effectively and supported a shared and consistent approach to planning for children's learning.

Children's views, ideas and interests were considered within planning processes. There were opportunities to strengthen how these were recorded, as the floor book occasionally contained limited evidence of children's contributions. Further developing approaches to capture and respond to the children's voice would support children to have a greater influence on their learning and the experiences provided within the setting.

Learning was shared with families through Seesaw (a digital app) and children had access to their own learning journals. A parent commented, "My child enjoys looking at seesaw with us and telling us about their learning". Observations were generally well written and included relevant next steps where appropriate. Learning priorities had been identified for individual children in line with local authority

guidance and were reviewed regularly. Trackers were also used to support the monitoring of children's learning, progress and achievement. Some links within observations and planning documentation demonstrated progress towards identified priorities. The head teacher agreed that further monitoring and oversight of these records would support greater consistency and help maintain the quality of planning, assessment and tracking processes across the setting.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support.

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.

Staff were warm, caring, attentive and demonstrated a good understanding of individual children. A parent commented, "I feel relaxed and at ease approaching any staff member. They all have a good understanding of my child". Support was adapted to meet children's emotional, developmental and learning needs. This was particularly evident when supporting children with emotional regulation and helping new families settle into the setting. Staff encouraged children to build confidence and develop new skills within a safe, nurturing environment. Consistent praise and encouragement helped children feel valued, secure and successful.

Children's wellbeing was supported through thoughtful transition arrangements, with staff recognising and responding to individual needs. A parent commented "The staff are all lovely, caring and attentive with the children. My child loves nursery and I know they are in safe hands". There were opportunities to strengthen support for some children during transitions, particularly at lunchtime. For example, children who were new to the setting or who required additional support could benefit from more reassurance and guidance when moving to unfamiliar environments. This would help children feel more confident, settled, secure and support their wellbeing and sense of belonging.

The service had previously used the "Zones of Regulation" to support children's emotional wellbeing. This approach helped children identify and communicate their feelings, supporting emotional awareness, self-regulation and wellbeing. While this was not consistently used at the time of the inspection, staff were keen to reintroduce it. This would provide children with regular opportunities to discuss how they were feeling and support staff to respond to their individual wellbeing needs.

Snack and mealtimes provided children with opportunities to develop independence and social skills. Children self-served snacks, poured their own drinks, made choices about their lunch and enjoyed relaxed interactions with their peers. At lunchtime, children were encouraged to pour drinks, access salad independently and clear their plates when finished. While support was available when needed, opportunities were identified to strengthen staff support during mealtimes, particularly for children who were new to the setting or required additional assistance. This would help ensure all children were able to access and enjoy their meal, develop independence at an appropriate pace and experience positive, nurturing mealtimes.

Systems were in place to support children's health, safety and wellbeing. Accidents and incidents were appropriately recorded and shared with parents, with monitoring arrangements in place through the service's auditing systems. Opportunities were identified to strengthen the review of records to identify trends and inform improvement. No medication was being stored at the time of the inspection; however, appropriate procedures and documentation were available. Children's allergies, intolerances and dietary preferences were clearly recorded to promote safety. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of

safeguarding responsibilities and the procedures to follow should concerns arise. This helped promote a culture where children's safety and wellbeing were prioritised.

Personal plans were in place and provided information about children's preferences, wellbeing and care needs. Opportunities were identified to improve consistency by reducing duplication and ensuring key information was recorded in a clear and accessible format. Some individual support strategies were in place; however, further development was needed to strengthen evaluative recording and evidence the impact of agreed approaches. A review of personal plans and support strategies would help ensure guidance for staff was clear, consistent and responsive to children's needs. This would support more personalised care and improve outcomes for children. A parent commented, "Staff listen well to information I share and use strategies I use at home to keep things consistent for my child".

The service worked to build and maintain positive relationships with families. Families received a warm welcome, and meaningful information about their children was shared during drop-off and collection times. A parent commented, "We love the family events we have been invited too". Parents were able to access their child's learning through Seesaw, while regular newsletters and play and stay sessions helped keep families informed and involved in the life of the service. This supported effective communication and partnership working, helping families feel engaged in their child's learning and development.

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	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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