

# 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 September 2024

**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 16 September 2024 between 9:15 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 the staff team and head teacher
- observed staff practice and the experiences of children
- reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

- Children were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing.
- Children benefitted from a good range resources that enabled children to explore their creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills.
- Lunch times should be reviewed to ensure children feel settled and secure.
- Children benefitted from a staff team and head teacher who were committed to continuous improvement.
- At times staffing levels did not consistently allow children to lead their play and learning.

**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?	3 - Adequate

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

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and Support

Children were happy and settled in the nursery. Children benefitted from warm, caring and sensitive interactions from skilled practitioners. Families commented "I feel 100% happy that my child is safe and being looked after with love and care" and "It is a nurturing calm and safe environment which my child loves. My child has really flourished since coming here". As a result, families had established trusting relationships with the the team.

Personal plans were in place and were reviewed with children and families. Families told us they had opportunities to discuss their child's learning with staff. Some children, had additional support plans. These should be reviewed, updated and monitored to include clear, individual strategies that were used consistently to support care, play and learning at a pace that was right for the child.

Snack time offered some opportunities for children to develop skills for life. They took on some tasks that included choosing the food for snack, setting tables and ensured milk and water was available to stay hydrated. Children ate their lunch in the school dining room. Some children who were settling into the routine of the day found lunch time difficult. This impacted on the mealtime experience for other children. The service have been proactive and made changes to ensure children receive a calm and relaxed mealtime experience. We have asked the service to review how children could have more ownership over the mealtime routine, promoting more choice and independence.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported. Allergies, dietary requirements and medical information was available. Medication was stored appropriately. Moving forward the service have agreed to include more detail under the signs and symptoms recorded on the medication sheets to keep children safe.

Children benefitted from their families being warmly welcomed into the service, this helped them settle into their day. Stay and play sessions were established and helped to build good working relationship with parents. Meaningful relationships had been formed with families who told us they felt included in the nursery community. A parent shared "staff are supportive of not only my child but myself. I feel happy to share any concerns with them and they are quick to respond to any issues". There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time as well as online updates. This holistic approach resulted in children that were happy and learning, and most families felt valued and included.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children were happy, confident and most were enjoying their time with their friends and staff. We saw some examples of children leading their play and learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. During this time children were having fun and some were absorbed in their play.

Play experiences across the nursery supported the development of children's language, literacy and numeracy skills. Children were able to practice and develop their skills through painting, cutting, gluing and mark making across the indoor and outdoor spaces. Examples of children's mark making were valued and

shared with parents. At times, children were supported to widen their skills and consolidate their learning from staff who used skilled interactions to support children's learning and development.

Staff used mathematical language when children were building large and small structures such as, taller and longer, more or less. As a result, children were developing a wide range of lifelong skills. Children were offered good experiences to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. At times, staff used effective questions, encouraging children to explore, test and develop ideas. For example, children collected leaves, twigs, mud and some flowers to make a unicorn potion. This encouraged the development of gross motor skills and hand eye co-ordination. Parents commented "Every day we come in at drop off there's new stations with exciting play and learning opportunities", "There always seems to be different exciting activities laid out for the children to explore" and "There are a huge variety of play experiences and the nursery is regularly changed up to keep it fresh and interesting".

Planning was a mixture of intentional and responsive. Staff had worked closely with the primary one teacher and developed a planning system. Response planning was recorded, however staff highlighted that this could be further developed to include evaluations of play opportunities. Children's individual learning and relevant next steps were recorded on a digital platform that was shared with parents. Staff used this well, alongside local authority trackers to ensure children were progressing well in their learning. Children were able to access their learning journey through scanning their own unique QR code. This meant children were able to discuss and revisit their learning with staff.

## 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 benefitted from an environment that was welcoming, well-ventilated with big windows offering natural light. Furnishings were of good quality. There were comfortable areas providing homely spaces that children used well.

The indoor environment was a developmentally appropriate space, offering children a range of age and stage appropriate resources. There were some loose parts and open-ended resources which offered children opportunity to be creative. Staff were evaluating the environment to ensure it provided sufficient challenge and depth of learning, which supported children's progression. Staff should de-clutter areas to ensure children are not overwhelmed by choice and its easier to clean. Families commented "It is a nurturing calm and safe environment which my child loves. They have really flourished since coming here".

The outdoor environment was a lovely space and provided a good range of resources and experience for children to be creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. During these experiences staff, at times, supported children and used effective questions, encouraging children to explore, play and develop. For safety reasons staff could not always encourage 'free flow' access to the outdoor space. This meant children's right to choose or to direct their own play and learning was limited.

Infection prevention and control procedures were in place that at times, helped minimise the spread of infection. For example, children washed their hands at appropriate times and were encouraged to do this independently. The service agreed to review the hand washing routine before children access their lunch. The nappy area should be tidied and the cupboard door closed. This would help keep children safe.

A secure entry system and ring doorbell helped maintain children and staff's safety. Children's information was managed by use of appropriate systems to protect confidentiality. Online information was password protected to comply with data protection requirements. This kept families personal information safe.

## 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

Children and families benefitted from a committed staff team. There was a happy and welcoming ethos in the service promoting a positive atmosphere for children to play and learn. The positive ethos meant staff were proactive in taking shared responsibility for change and improvement. Staff were motivated and wanted to meet children's needs. However, they often found it difficult to meet children's individual needs and carry out everyday tasks. At times this impacted on children's wellbeing, staff's morale and wellbeing.

Children and families were regularly consulted and their views gathered. Most parents strongly agreed they are involved in a meaningful way to help develop the setting. This gave a strong message that their views mattered. Parents comments included "Regular opportunities to go into the service are available", "We especially appreciate the play and stay days where we are invited into the nursery" and "Regular chats with staff on top of a good amount of parents nights etc".

A realistic improvement plan was in place and priorities were outcome focussed. Staff were monitoring and reviewing the priorities, meaning there was a clear overview of progress. This meant the service continued to improve. The service had made links with other professionals within the early years team to share good practice. Staff fully engaged in the inspection process and appreciated the guidance and suggestions offered by the inspector. This demonstrated their commitment and motivation to make improvements to ensure positive outcomes for children.

We have highlighted throughout this inspection that at times the deployment of staff impacted on good outcomes for children. There were times when children were not adequately supervised and their right to choose was limited, because staff were supporting other children's wellbeing needs.

## How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

### Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment

Children were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing. Staff tried to provide individualised support by effectively engaging with children. Staff worked well as a team and demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play experiences. However, they did not always have the time to intervene, meaning children did not always have the support they required.

Staff shared a common vision and worked hard to achieve good quality play and learning for children. They were supportive of each other and their differing skills, knowledge and experience complimented one

another. They communicated in a respectful manner with each other. This contributed to children being respected and created a positive team ethos within the service. Families commented "The staff are very welcoming, friendly and approachable. They take the time to get to know my child and family well," and "The team are great, you can tell they really care and my child absolutely loves going to nursery every day!".

Staffing levels did not consistently allow children to lead their play and learning. For example, the effective deployment of staff in the setting meant at times children could not move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment. This meant the service could not always meet children's individual play choices. There were also times when children's safety was compromised due to staff having to attend to children's individual support needs. Staff deployment requires attention and the Local Authority have assured the Care Inspectorate that staff deployment would be reviewed. This would ensure children's safety, wellbeing and overall early learning and childcare experience would not be compromised (area for improvement 1).

### Areas 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).

### Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - 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?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate



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