

# Wilton Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Wellfield Road  
Hawick  
TD9 7EN

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
5 December 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Scottish Borders Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001976

**Service no:**  
CS2003017387

## About the service

Wilton Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 49 children aged from two years, to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of those 49 children, no more than five children are aged two years to under three years.

The service is provided across two playrooms within Wilton Primary School. Children had direct access to outdoors and the addition of an enclosed woodland area. The service is close to local parks, woodlands and amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 03 December 2024 between 09:15 and 16:30. We returned to the service on 05 December 2024 between 09:00 and 09:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors.

To prepare for this inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- Spoke with and observed children using the service
- Received written feedback from 17 families
- Spoke with staff and received written feedback from 11 staff members
- Spoke with the manager and the leadership team
- Observed practice and children's routines and experiences
- Reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

- The strong relationships that had been built contributed to the warm, welcoming atmosphere that children and families experienced.
- Personal care plans should be revisited, to ensure that strategies of support are appropriate and promote a strength based approach.
- The provider and the service should review the lunchtime routine and look at ways in which this experience can be improved.
- Staff spoke passionately about engaging with families and the value this brings to children's early learning experience.
- The leadership team had worked in partnership with staff to bring about positive changes and had created a culture of continuous improvement.
- There was a clear process for the induction and mentoring of new or temporary staff using the skills and knowledge of the existing staff team.
- Effective use was made of the differing experience, knowledge and skills of the staff group to ensure children's experience positive play and learning opportunities.

**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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very 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 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 experienced kind, warm, caring and nurturing approaches from staff. Staff knew children and families well and responded sensitively to their individual needs. The strong relationships that had been built contributed to the welcoming atmosphere that children and families experienced. Families told us, "Staff are very friendly and caring" and "I love how much you are involved...the transparency of the staff is great" whilst another parent complimented the, "Very warm and welcoming staff". However, interactions across the day were not consistent and at times did not always take a nurturing approach. Some interactions observed during different routines across the day could be improved. For example, during some group times staff did not always pick up on children's cues when they were finding the expectation of sitting and waiting for a long period of time difficult. As a result, interactions within some groups became very focussed on children's behaviour and failed to take a nurturing approach. The service should reflect and revisit daily routines and the pace of the day to ensure that the values of the service and children's rights are embedded in all areas of practice. This would contribute to all children experiencing positive, consistent interactions across the day, in turn, contributing to their overall wellbeing.

Staff valued and recognised the importance of nurturing strong relationships and attachments. This was evident through many of the practices and discussions with staff across the service. An example of this was transition work, where individual, tailored plans were put in place to support children. To further compliment their transition plans, the service worked in partnership with other settings, building positive working relationships. For example, connecting with local private settings and childminders. This had supported children to experience a nurturing, sensitive transition that was right for them. One parent told us, "The staff at Wilton ELC are excellent. They are all very welcoming and friendly when we attend, not only asking how our child is but asking us as parents also. I feel all staff are approachable should we have any concerns or queries. This positive relationship has helped our child settle in well and made the transition easy for us as parents knowing our child is well looked after". This contributed to children feeling valued, safe and listened to.

Personal plans had been reviewed and updated in partnership with families. Staff could confidently talk about individual children and their likes, dislikes and wishes. Chronologies captured significant events and these were shared across the whole team, to ensure that all staff were aware of key information relating to supporting individual children. We encouraged the service to strengthen the recording of pastoral information for families that were receiving additional support. The service had worked in partnership with other key professionals to develop support strategies and strengthen their own knowledge and understanding, in order to best support some children. However, some strategies that had been implemented were not appropriate. Some strategies focussed on the use of external rewards being used to encourage 'positive behaviour'. The personal planning approach should be revisited to ensure that strategies of support are appropriate and promote a strength based approach. The service was receptive to our feedback and had begun to reflect on this practice during the course of our inspection.

Children experienced a positive, relaxed and sociable snack time routine. Children were part of the planning, preparation and serving of their own snack.

Children helped to prepare the snack menu and visited the local shops to purchase the ingredients each week. This promoted choice, independence and responsibility. However, the lunchtime experience required further development. Children visited the school dinner hall for their lunch which was very busy, chaotic and noisy. Whilst staff did their best to have interactions with children as they sat with them at lunchtime, due to the noise level and the length of the tables, not all children experienced quality adult interactions. We observed one child covering their ears within the space as the noise level was so loud. We would encourage the provider and the service to review the lunchtime experience and look at ways in which the mealtime experience for children can be improved.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children could freely access core resources such as, sand, water, playdough, mark making, paints and crafts. As a result, children were focussed and leading their own play and learning. The service should ensure that these resources are replenished. For example, the sand tray indoors had very little sand, this made it difficult for one child who was trying to bury items within it. A variety of loose parts and open ended materials were available both indoors and outdoors. These contributed to children's creativity and imagination as they freely added these to their play and learning.

Children's play and learning opportunities were enhanced through links with the local community. Staff told us, "The service is particularly successful in it's relationships with children and their families. The use of the local community is also great, with children gaining a lot from these experiences" and another commenting, "I feel we are very lucky with our environment. We are able to offer woodland play everyday along with our gardening group each week where children are learning about growing their own vegetables and using them for our own snack. We venture out into the community by attending our local library and currently planning on linking up with a care home". Learning walks in the local area, weekly trips to the shops to purchase snack items, along with visits to the local park and museum all provided new and exciting play and learning opportunities.

The setting continued to explore opportunities to create new ways of working in partnership with families and involve them in the life of the setting. Staff spoke passionately about engaging with families and the value this brought to children's early learning experience. The service practiced an open door policy with families at all times, to ensure they were meaningfully engaged in the service. As a result, families were actively engaged in the service on a daily basis through a number of different experiences. For example, coming into the playroom at drop off and pick up times on a daily basis, daily stay and play sessions with their child, parent open evenings, individual meetings with families, engaging with electronic journals, along with initiatives such as, the big bedtime read. This promoted and encouraged the sharing of stories at home and was facilitated each week by a member of staff. Families told us, "Staff have great communications. Very encouraging to parents being involved with stay and plays and book club. Regular updates on Showbie" and another highlighted that staff, "Take extra time with me to explain stuff when I don't fully understand and make me feel very comfortable when talking to the staff". One family told us, "When entering Wilton ELC if feel there is always a welcoming and calm atmosphere, staff always take the time to discuss how my child's day has went. There are also ample opportunities for parents to be involved such as stay and play dates & accompany on trips to the library". This contributed to families feeling valued and involved in their child's care, play and learning.

The service continued to work on how they planned for children's play and learning. Ongoing meetings between senior leadership and the staff team supported the ongoing monitoring of children's learning and progression. Staff used developmental trackers to support them to highlight potential gaps and create next steps for children. Quality improvement discussions during the inspection highlighted the need to

strengthen the responsive planning and ensure a better balance between intentional planning and responsive planning. Observations focussed predominantly on numeracy, literacy and wellbeing. Whilst these areas were important, quality improvement discussions with the leadership team during the inspection highlighted the importance of ensuring that children's interests and threads of learning are also captured. The service was receptive to this feedback. The service had recently begun to develop their evaluation floor book. This was still in its infancy and required further time to develop and embed this important area of the planning cycle. This would contribute to children being able to see their interests being reflected in the play and learning opportunities they experienced.

## 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

The environment was bright, well-ventilated and natural colours and quality furnishings supported a calm and welcoming atmosphere. Staff had used furniture to create small enclosed spaces which promoted a sense of privacy for children. For example, dark enclosed area under the tuff tray frame, a small tipi, small reading areas and a wooden shed in the garden space. This developed relationships based on trust as children could be away from the gaze of the adults in the space and spend time alone if they wished. One parent shared, "When entering Wilton ELC you feel there is always a welcoming & calm atmosphere".

Direct access outdoors promoted choice and enabled children to freely move between indoors and outdoors, extending their own play and following their own ideas. Children's play spaces had been thoughtfully developed to offer a wide range of inviting opportunities. We observed children exploring opportunities such as balancing on rope walk ways, enjoying the tree swing in the woodland area, threading popcorn feeders for the birds, decorating the trees outdoors with baubles of their choice for Christmas. The woodland area was an extension of the garden space and children could access this for part of their session each day. Woodland play opportunities was embedded in the daily routine for children and offered a wonderful opportunity for children to explore a more natural environment. Children were involved with the development of the outdoors and had helped staff to build equipment such as the climbing triangle. These all contributed to children's overall health and wellbeing.

Literacy and numeracy was threaded throughout the play spaces, with the addition of a variety of resources. Books were scattered around the environment at different areas, with children taking the opportunity to sit quietly and explore books alone or with adults. Routines such as snack time also supported children's early literacy and numeracy skills. These routines were supported with visuals which supported children to understand the sequencing of the routine. Environmental print was evident in some of the play spaces, however this could be further developed with photos or symbols to support children's emergent literacy and numeracy. For example, signs and labels could be developed further to help bridge the connection between letters and emergent reading. This would support children to begin to associate print with meaning as they begin to understand that signs and words are there to convey a message.

Background music was being played continually through the smart board in one of the playrooms. Whilst we recognised the benefit of music being offered as an experience for children, this should be with a purpose. Music continued to play during group time and throughout the whole day, this then simply became background noise and added to the noise level at points throughout the day. This can have a negative impact on children's communication and language development.

The service should reflect on when and for how long background music is introduced and ensure this is enhancing children's care, play and learning experience.

## How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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.

### Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The leadership team had worked in partnership with staff to bring about positive changes and had created a culture of continuous improvement. Leaders had created conditions where all people felt valued and confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process. One staff member told us, "We strive to give the children the best place to grow, develop and learn in, we go above and beyond to make our setting the best it can be". This contributed to the positive relationships that had been built.

Quality assurance systems, ongoing monitoring and auditing processes, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, were in place and had led to improvements. The leadership team carried out quality observations and audits, with individual staff receiving feedback on their practice. This helped to create an open culture where constructive feedback was welcomed. We found staff were very open to improvement discussions during the inspection and welcomed our feedback and improvement suggestions.

Communication across the team was key and the service had continued to evaluate and strengthen this. Staff were supported by leadership to participate in meaningful reflective discussions, where clear actions were set to support ongoing improvements. The leadership team were present and modelled good practice, participate in key meetings and development sessions with the staff team. Children and families views were actively sought to inform the development of the setting. A 'you said', 'we did' approach helped the service to close the feedback loop and inform families as to how their thoughts and comments were having an impact on the service. This contributed to everyone feeling valued and an important part of the service.

Strong leadership supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. Self-evaluation enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families particular needs and choices. For example, ongoing senior leadership meetings, weekly staff meetings and strong communication across the staff team. A shared leadership approach was evident, with staff being supported to develop and build on their strengths and follow their ideas and passions. This contributed to a positive atmosphere that could be felt across the service.

Staff training was tailored and responded to staff views, requests and addressed children's needs. For example, weekly training sessions had been organised for the whole staff team with an occupational health therapist from NHS Lothian, whilst another staff member had attended speech and language training and had then shared this learning with the whole staff team. This contributed to positive outcomes for all.

The service had welcomed other settings to share good practice and continued to look for opportunities to develop their setting.

One staff member told us, "There is always room for improvement in our setting and we constantly strive to do better we constantly look for way to improve and are happy to be given constructive criticism as at times

you need a fresh pair of eyes". The service also welcomed external quality assurance from Scottish Borders Council, with recent feedback praising the staff team on their great self-evaluation skills and teamwork.

The leadership team responded well to constructive feedback during the inspection process and had immediately begun to research and implement changes and improvements following our improvement discussions. This positive approach continued to contribute to improved outcomes for children, families and staff.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

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.

### Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The service was appropriately staffed throughout the day, with additional staffing coming in to cover busy times such as, the lunchtime routine. Staff worked as a whole team, but mini teams had also been created to support effective communication and development work across the playrooms. Effective use was made of the differing experience, knowledge and skills of the staff group to ensure children experienced positive play and learning opportunities. For example, staff joined up to work in the woodland area as this was an area that they were passionate and knowledgeable in. Staff communicated within one another throughout the day and were flexible, supporting one other, and working as a team to benefit children. Staff were confident to approach leadership and highlighted when they required additional support in the space to meet the needs of individual children. This contributed to positive outcomes for all.

Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communication. For example, consideration had been given to the children attending the full day, and how the end of the day may feel for them as parents arrived to collect children. The staff had developed a different programme of opportunities that supported these children to have different experiences at this time. This contributed to children's overall wellbeing.

Staff breaks were planned to minimise impact on the children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. Staff were proactive in recognising where gaps may have existed, and were flexible in their approach to ensure these were addressed quickly. Staff communicated very well with their colleagues when a task took them away from their responsibilities. This supported staff to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with the children across the day.

There was a clear process for the induction and mentoring of new or temporary staff using the skills and knowledge of the existing staff team. The National Induction resource was used to support ongoing reflective discussions and ensure induction was recognised as a process and not a one off event. Staff shared their positive induction experience and the ongoing mentoring support they had received. This contributed to children and staff's overall health, wellbeing and safety.

Staff were flexible when specific outings or additional activities required changes to their routines. Staff spoke about the importance of all staff understanding what events were taking place each day so that anyone was able to step in and support these to take place.



This contributed to children experiencing consistency and continuity in their routines, and minimised disruption. For example, all staff working together to ensure that 'big bedtime read' was offered consistently each week.

Staff used an electronic app, private chat to update staff on key information each day, this supported all staff to plan ahead and feel confident in conversations with children and families.

## 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

The storage and administration of medication forms should be reviewed and updated to ensure they are in line with current guidance 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding settings'. This would contribute to the health and safety of children who may require medication while in attendance at the service.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing

**This area for improvement was made on 14 September 2017.**

#### Action taken since then

The management and administration of medication was in line with good practice. Staff could confidently talk about children's individual medication and shared how and when this would be safely administered. Ongoing monitoring of medication meant that any discrepancies were addressed quickly. This contributed to the safety, health and wellbeing of children.

**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.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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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