

# Bilston Primary School Nursery Class

## Day Care of Children

Bilston Primary School  
Park Avenue  
Bilston  
Roslin  
EH25 9SD

Telephone: 01314 449 021

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
7 November 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Midlothian Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002602

**Service no:**  
CS2016349344

## About the service

Bilston Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children aged from 3 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school.

Children were cared for in one playroom that had direct access to a sensory room, toilets and outdoor play space. Other areas in the school were used such as, the playground areas and gym hall. The setting is close to local parks, woodlands and amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 05 November 2024 between 09:00 and 16:00 and Wednesday 06 November between 08:30 and 10:45. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was also present at the inspection as part of the Care Inspectorate's quality assurance processes. 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 children using the service
- spoke with nine families during our visits and received five on line questionnaires
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and routines
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches from all staff to support their overall wellbeing.
- The inclusive and welcoming ethos established close relationships with families.
- Staff could build and extend children's interests further through effective questioning.
- The welcoming environment supported children to feel important within the space and contributed to their overall wellbeing.
- Staff communicated very well with each other and worked together to ensure children were safe and engaged in quality experiences throughout the day.
- Self-evaluation should continue to be a focus to ensure continued high-quality experiences for children.

## 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?	4 - 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 different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff demonstrated warm, caring, and nurturing approaches, showing an understanding of each child's individual needs. They provided sensitive, personalised care and offered encouragement, support and recognition that reflected their genuine interest in children. For those who required additional support, staff provided thoughtful and effective support to ensure their needs were met. Visual timetables were used to help children understand daily routines and transitions, enhancing their sense of security and independence. Staff fostered an environment where each child felt comfortable being their unique self, ensuring that everyone could participate fully and confidently. This approach helped build self-esteem, supported emotional wellbeing and promoted a positive sense of inclusion and belonging. Families were appreciative of the staff team, with one telling us, "All the staff are very friendly and always on hand to talk or help with anything I need help with". Furthermore, a staff member shared the supportive relationships they had built with families, telling us, "I have formed close relationships with parents/carers, they have been able to open up to us and share any concerns or worries they have". This open communication helped build trust and supported continuity between home and the setting.

Positive contributions, such as kindness and helpfulness, were celebrated with praise, and many children visibly enjoyed the recognition. Some staff even created a 'heart' for the 'stars moment' wall display and gave a duplicate to take home, fostering a sense of pride and connection. These thoughtful practices contributed to building confidence and wellbeing, helping children feel loved and valued.

As described by a staff member families were, "Involved in the nursery by inviting them in for stay and play sessions, we are always improving on our practice and devoted to meet the children's needs". Families were warmly welcomed into the setting for both drop-off and pick-up times, fostering a collaborative environment where families felt comfortable and involved in their child's day. Staff engaged with families by asking about the child's night at home and sharing updates on the child's experiences and progress in the setting. We observed children confidently lead their parents around the playroom and garden, proudly showing them what they had been playing with. This demonstrated the children's sense of ownership and pride in their learning, fostering strong connections between home and the setting while encouraging communication and sharing of their experiences. The outcome was positive interactions that supported children's social and emotional development, as they felt valued and confident in sharing their learning environment with their families.

Personal plans were in place and well-organised ensuring easy access and clarity for all staff. These plans, which included wellbeing and pastoral care chronologies, wellbeing record sheets, learner profiles, and observations shared through Seesaw, demonstrated an understanding of each child's unique needs, interests, and showed progression in their learning. Children who had additional support needs were cared for in a calm and supportive manner. Strategies had been identified using Up, Up and Away planning which had been adapted and individualised.

Children demonstrated responsibility and independence during daily routines, such as changing into indoor

or outdoor shoes. They actively reminded and supported each other, fostering a cooperative and supportive environment. For example, they helped one another locate wellies when needed. The rolling snack time further encouraged self-regulation, as children had the freedom to decide when to eat, allowing them to manage their own needs without interrupting their play. These practices not only promoted independence but also helped develop social skills, decision-making and self-regulation.

There was lots of fun and laughter shared between groups of children, as well as between children and staff, which was evident throughout our visits. Strong friendships had been developed, with children excitedly greeting each other, running hand-in-hand, and playing in groups and pairs. The outcome of these joyful interactions was a nurturing environment where children thrived in their play and learning. These friendships and positive social connections support children's emotional wellbeing, enriching their learning experiences and fostered a sense of belonging and community within the setting.

### **Quality Indicator: 1.3 Play and learning**

Children enthusiastically participated in setting up for snack time, a routine that provided rich learning experiences in a fun and engaging way. Through tasks like discussing the first letters of their siblings' names while arranging snack labels, and negotiating roles, such as who would carry the cups or jugs, children practiced essential communication, social, and teamwork skills.

With a sense of pride and sense of accomplishment, they announced to their friends that snack was ready, fostering a strong sense of responsibility and community within the group. This had not gone unnoticed by a parent who told us "My child is encouraged to get involved in the nursery community and be a responsible citizen". This routine nurtured children's confidence and independence.

A mixture of fiction and non-fiction books were also available in and outdoors. Children were using these for reference, and taking comfort when having stories read to them. This was supporting children to foster a joy of reading and exploring words. Mark making opportunities were available indoors and out. Children were engaged in mark making through spontaneous play and when encouraged by staff. They showed us their names on the height charts and they were taking advantage of all the available resources to explore and experiment with mark making. The environment was enabling and to further enhance children's play experiences staff will continue to develop and strengthen effective questioning approaches in their practice, in line with planned priorities in the setting improvement plan.

Children were using iPads in their play and learning such as taking photographs, searching for information, recording voice notes and videos. We observed children taking photographs with a teddy resulting in much hilarity. In recognition of the important learning, children's digital learning was being tracked to ensure enhancement of skills, continuity and progression. The online 'Seesaw' platform was being developed to include children more actively in its use, allowing them to engage in the completion of their digital profiles. This supported their digital literacy, enhanced communication skills, and fostered a sense of fun and collaboration.

Children had access to loose parts play with open-ended materials that could be freely explored. This type of play promoted creativity, critical thinking, and experimentation as children discovered different ways to use and combine the materials. We saw social interaction and collaboration, as children shared their ideas and resources while engaging in cooperative play.

The outdoor space provided some physical challenge, with larger loose parts available for building and climbing, which children enjoyed. This facilitated the development of skills such as risk management, problem-solving and collaborative play. However, children's engagement was not sustained throughout the day. We encouraged the staff team to enhance play and learning opportunities by increasing the variety of

loose parts and to be more responsive to children's evolving needs for challenge. This includes identifying when children require further challenge in their play, both in the moment and as they develop new skills over time.

## 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 welcoming, and natural daylight complimented the space. Neutral colours, wooden furnishings and quality soft furnishings added to the nurturing, calm and relaxed atmosphere. This supported children to feel important within the space and contributed to their overall wellbeing.

Children had access to a variety of spaces within the nursery setting, as well as the wider school and playground, providing them with opportunities to explore different environments and engage in a variety of experiences. The sensory room, located just off the playroom, offered benefits by providing a calm, quiet space where children could regulate their emotions, engage in sensory exploration, and take a break from more stimulating environments. We observed how staff sensitively picked up on a child's cue that they needed to use this space, demonstrating that staff practice successfully supported children's emotional wellbeing and regulation.

Having key facilities such as toilets, kitchen, office, and a direct door into the garden all in close proximity enhanced the daily flow of the setting. It ensured that staff could respond quickly to children's needs, promoted independence by allowing children easy access to necessary areas, and created a seamless environment where routines could be carried out smoothly and efficiently.

Children had ample space to move around and could choose to be indoors or out, respecting their choices. Wall displays, although some up very high, respectfully presented children's work and celebrated their family home lives, fostering a sense of value and belonging. The well-resourced areas supported children to freely move resources. The freedom to move resources enhanced problem-solving skills, creativity, and social interaction among the children.

The location of the cloakroom area, within the setting itself, made some adaptations challenging. During the inspection, the cloakroom area was observed to be disorganised and messy meaning the cluttered space made it difficult for children to easily find and store their belongings. However, steps have already been taken to improve the situation by the provision of outdoor storage to allow easy access and encourage independence. The children's toilet area was in need of a deep clean, suggesting better cleaning and upkeep was needed by both facilitates management and practitioners. The manager agreed to address these both immediately.

Children enjoyed exploring most of the indoor and outdoor areas, engaging in activities such as building dens on the climbing frame, playing football, painting and relishing the freedom to run. However, the outdoor kitchen area was unused during our visits. Staff and children should move forward with their plans to revisit this space to make it more inviting and engaging. This should involve reassessing the materials available, ensuring the area is clean and well organised, and considering how to better support creative, imaginative play. Enhancing the appeal of this space would provide children with more opportunities for learning and exploration. This was further confirmed by a staff member who told us, "The nursery is safe

and secure with any maintenance work required noted in the maintenance book. Some areas of the outdoors are looking tired and in need of being refreshed which has been identified and through environmental reviews will be worked on". Environmental reviews are regularly carried out to inform areas for development and planning for next steps. The team should continue to use environmental reviews to inform areas for development and planning for next steps to ensure all areas of the environment are inviting and exciting.

## 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

The manager was engaging throughout the inspection process, which fostered transparent conversations in areas such as effective questioning, increasing challenge for children, more consistent quality assurance and lunchtime. It was clear the manager knew the children and their families well, which enabled them to support the team effectively in meeting the children's needs. Staff told us they felt supported by the manager, an example comment being "Our Head Teacher has nurture as a top priority here working at Bilston. Her door is always open for staff who need support". This fostered a positive work environment for staff which in turn improved outcomes for children.

Staff were involved in self-evaluation, using a variety of best practices such as Realising the Ambition: Being me (Education Scotland, 2020) and How good is our early learning and childcare (Education Scotland 2016) to assess their practice and identify areas for improvement. Through this process, they developed action plans to address any gaps in practice, ensuring a focused approach to continuous improvement. Parents were also involved in the evaluation, offering valuable feedback and suggestions for enhancing the indoor and outdoor reading areas. One parent noted that they were "Involved in doing an environmental audit of the story corners," while another shared that, "Sometimes at stay and play we are asked to give our opinions or ideas. I like this and there's always some interesting ideas from other parents as well." This collaborative approach ensured that families played an active role in shaping the learning environment. It was encouraging to hear that these environmental reviews would continue, supporting the creation of a more challenging space for the children.

When asked about potential improvements, most families expressed satisfaction, with many stating "Nothing" could be enhanced. Positive feedback included, "I honestly don't think there is anything, it's a brilliant nursery" and "I can't think of anything, it really is fantastic". Parents were regularly updated on their child's progress and learning was shared through daily discussions and weekly updates on SeeSaw, as well as access to paper based and digital learning profiles which were shared at monthly stay and play sessions. However, family feedback to us indicated that not all families felt included in the regular reviews of their child's play and learning as one family noted they would like "Parent consultations every six months to update parents on how their child is getting on". The manager acknowledged and valued the opinions of all parents and will lead the staff team in discussions taking into consideration current approaches to parent consultations.

Staff spoke positively about the support they had received from the central team, particularly with the recent plans for play. They expressed feeling better equipped to meet the needs of both the group and individual children through more responsive and intentional planning. This responsiveness helped create a

more engaging and nurturing environment, leading to improved learning outcomes and a stronger sense of support and connection for both children and the staff.

## How good is our staff team?

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 4.3 Staff deployment

Children had positive experiences throughout the day, supported by staff who positioned themselves both indoors and outdoors to facilitate free-flow play. By being at the children's height, staff were approachable and easily accessible, allowing for meaningful interactions. This positioning encouraged children to access the level of care and support they needed from staff, fostering independence while ensuring their wellbeing. Staff responsiveness was evident when children needed comfort, such as after falling over and seeking cuddles or sensitively supporting those who were less engaged. This attentiveness and calm demeanour created a nurturing environment where children felt safe, cared for, and supported in their emotional wellbeing and physical needs. Families were appreciative of the staff team, and one used our online questionnaire to say, "Thank you to all the staff for being an important part of my child's early years".

Staff communicated well across the spaces to ensure that they were all working together to best meet the needs of individual children. Staff informed each other and children as they were about to leave play areas. This supported positive relationships and children were being reassured as to where key members of staff were and when they would return. Daily huddles helped ensure a consistent approach within the staff team in fostering a supportive environment for children.

Families were complimentary of the staff team, with all confirming they had a strong connection with the staff caring for their child. They described staff as "Friendly", "Approachable", "Absolutely fabulous", "Nurturing and highly experienced". This positive feedback highlighted the strong partnerships between families and staff, contributing to a supportive and nurturing environment that promoted children's wellbeing and development.

Staff had distributive leadership roles in areas such as literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and outdoor learning. Staff took on responsibility for planning, driving improvements and enhancing outcomes in these specific areas. This approach led to focused, intentional support and positive outcomes for all children. To ensure the smooth implementation of initiatives, such as forest visits, a more effective system for securing parental permissions was needed. This would help prevent delays in delivering these valuable experiences to children.

The setting had experienced a change in the team and a position had not been filled before a staff member left. This gap in staffing had presented several challenges, particularly during lunchtime. To allow staff to take their breaks in a timely manner without interfering with the afternoon schedule, children were now having their lunch in the lunch hall. Although the lunchtime we observed in the lunch hall was manageable for children, as staff sat and ate with them, this arrangement meant children did not have opportunities to be independent and hindered their ability to make choices. While this change ensured staff breaks were managed, the manager and staff knew the benefits of children eating in their room, and were due to revert back as soon as a new staff member started.



## 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	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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