

Loretto Pre School Day Care of Children

Loretto Junior School
North Esk Lodge
North High Street
Musselburgh
EH21 6JA

Telephone: 01316 534 570

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 March 2025

Service provided by:
Loretto School

Service provider number:
SP2005007905

Service no:
CS2019373560

About the service

Loretto Pre-school is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children aged from 3 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time.

The Pre-school is an integral part of the Loretto Junior School in the town of Musselburgh, East Lothian. Children have access to the wider school campus for specialist classes, outdoor learning and make consistent use of the local community.

The Pre-school premises is a converted residential building. Children have access to the ground floor of the building which comprises of two playrooms, cloakroom and toilet facilities. Children have direct access to the outdoor area from their main playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 March 2025 between 9:00 and 15:00. The inspection was carried out by an inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

This inspection was part of a pilot to test the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors' developed jointly with Education Scotland. Because this inspection was part of a pilot, no new evaluations (grades) have been awarded.

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.

During the inspection we:

- spoke with six children during their play
- reviewed comments submitted digitally from one family
- spoke with three staff, the manager (deputy head of the Junior School) and head teacher of the Junior School
- observed staff practice and the experiences of children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The premises used by children provided a high quality environment which was warm, welcoming and suitable for their needs.
- Play spaces enabled children to lead their own learning, make choices in their play and move freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing and responsive care from staff that encouraged them to feel respected, valued and included.
- Information collected by staff could be further strengthened to include individual support strategies which could be monitored and adapted as necessary.
- Procedures for the safety and welfare of children were embedded in staff practice.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

Quality indicator – Children experience high quality spaces

Children were cared for in a safe and secure environment. Systems to mitigate risks and ensure children's safety were in place and regular audits ensured the maintenance of a safe and secure premises. Children told us about road safety, moving water safety and how to climb trees and 'not be frightened'. These experiences supported children to have an emerging understanding of risk and how to protect their own safety.

Staff regularly evaluated the spaces used by children to ensure that they met their needs and reflected current good practice guidance. This helped to maintain the high-quality care environment for children. The areas used by children were clean and well organised, which enabled effective cleaning. Children were well supported to follow good infection, prevention and control (IPC) practices such as hand washing. Policies and procedures were in place to share with parents and staff the IPC practices followed in the setting. This helped to support children's health and wellbeing.

The service was provided from a substantial converted house, set within the extensive grounds of Loretto Junior School. The setting provided a quiet natural environment with minimal intrusion from traffic noise and the busy town. The grounds were used by children for the twice weekly Forest School activities. Children told us about the 'owl tree' and activities they had recently been involved in at the nearby beach. These consistent opportunities for exploring the outdoor environment provided children with exciting child-led learning.

When not using the wider natural areas, children had free flow access to the outdoor area from their main playroom. Staff had a very good understanding of the importance of outdoor physical activity and children were encouraged to go outside to play for at least part of the day. The outdoor area was well designed to provide a very good range of learning environments and opportunities. Children were following an interest in traffic and road safety and had designed a car wash as part of this interest. There were areas for water, sand, planting, mud kitchen type activities and physical play.

The indoor premises was welcoming and homely. The two playrooms provided children with well-

maintained and resourced play spaces. The main playroom was smaller and provided a cosy, learning rich environment. The very good use of real-life and loose part resources supported children's imagination and problem-solving skills. The larger playroom was used for snack, lunch and provided a good range of resources such as additional dressing up and building materials. Staff could be deployed in a way which enabled children to free flow between the two playrooms and use a wider range of resources.

Across the indoor and outdoor environments there was very good provision for literacy and numeracy. Staff were frequently asked to read stories and children accessed books and role-played reading them to each other. There was a good selection of environmental print used throughout the play spaces and children had several opportunities to self-register, which helped them to begin letter and name recognition. Some children were very engaged in mark making and writing numbers. Children talked about weight, measure and numbers in real-life contexts and staff supported these conversations well.

Children are supported to achieve

Quality indicator - Nurturing care and support.

Children were very well supported by a consistent staff team who had developed warm and responsive relationships with them. Staff were skilled at supporting children to express their needs and wishes and children went easily to staff for comfort and assistance. Children knew the staff caring for them and some spoke about staff in a warm and affectionate manner.

Staff knew children well and were able to support individual children with changes and transitions throughout the day. For example, children were supported by pre-school staff to attend the Twilight service, which operated after pre-school finished, and there was a flexible approach to the attendance at wider school events such as Junior School assemblies. This helped children build confidence, and resilience when faced with changes.

Children were cared for by staff who respected their growing need for independence. Children could make several decisions and choices throughout their day, including where to play and what to eat. They were supported to develop self-help skills such as dressing for outdoor play. Staff ensured that children's privacy and dignity was promoted during personal care routines providing support where necessary.

Children enjoyed the opportunities for snack and lunch. Snacks and meals followed good nutritional practice and provided children with a range of healthy food choices. Children were involved in the making of morning snack and although children could choose when to come for snack they did so in a group. This provided a very sociable experience for children where they sat and chatted to staff and each other about their morning. Lunch provided several meaningful opportunities. Staff supported children to carry out tasks such as setting the table, serve their food, use cutlery and pour their own drinks. The pace of the meal provided time for children to relax, rest and get ready for the busy afternoon.

Children's health, wellbeing and development was well supported by the range of information that had been collected by staff to help them meet children's needs. We refer to these as personal plans. Personal plans had been developed to take account of good practice guidance such as Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Staff could describe clearly the support that individual children received and the impact that support strategies had. To further strengthen personal planning a system to clearly outline the areas of support and how this is monitored could be developed. This would enable staff to clearly track the success of personal planning strategies and adapt them as necessary.

The leadership team and staff had developed very positive relationships with families and knew them well. They had created a warm environment where families were welcomed and valued as partners in their child's pre-school experience. Children discussed their home experiences, such as extended family or pets with staff. Staff understood the importance of sibling contact during the day and promoted this where possible. This helped children with transition and offered them a shared experience.

Staff shared information with parents through daily conversations, the bulletin board, use of online learning journals and several school social events throughout the year. Parents had opportunities to attend regular meetings to discuss and plan children's progress and opportunities to give feedback about aspects of the service as part of the service continuous improvement planning.

Quality indicator – Safeguarding and child protection.

To support the safeguarding and protection of children there were clear policies and procedures in place for staff to follow. These were shared with all staff and parents to ensure that everyone was aware of their responsibility to protect the welfare of children. Policies and procedures took account of national guidance and were regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflected current guidance and practice.

The leadership team had appropriate training to support their professional knowledge, understanding and skill in supporting staff with safeguarding or child protection concerns. Staff took part in regular training opportunities to ensure that they could develop their confidence and understanding of safeguarding and child protection. This included formal training and reflective practice discussions with colleagues.

We have commented on the positive and trusting relationships that children had with staff. Staff were skilled in observing and listening to children. This would support them to identify concerns and help children share information. The positive partnerships with parents supported safeguarding through sensitive but effective communication and helped to develop a shared approach to the protection of children.

There were systems in place to ensure that children's information was kept in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidance. The use of the digital platform for sharing information about children was password protected. Registration and personal details were kept on a secure server. CCTV was used specifically to monitor access areas which helped to ensure children's safety. Staff had a clear understanding of confidentiality and protecting children's personal information. This ensured that children's information was used properly, shared appropriately and kept safe.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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