

Stoneyhill Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Clayknowes Way
Stoneyhill
Musselburgh
EH21 6UL

Telephone: 01316 653 119

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 April 2025

Service provided by:
East Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002600

Service no:
CS2003016993

About the service

Stoneyhill Primary School Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 30 children during each session, aged 3 years to not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided by East Lothian Council in premises within Stoneyhill Primary School in the town of Musselburgh in East Lothian.

The nursery had access to one main playroom, toilets, and nappy change area. The enclosed outdoor area is accessed from the playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 April 2025 between 09:45 and 16:15. 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
- reviewed the responses from nineteen parents using the nursery
- spoke staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed document

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning.

This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, responsive care from staff who were reassuring, comforting and gentle in their interactions with children.
- Staff knew children very well and were committed to maintaining positive relationships and effective communication with children and their families.
- Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes had been developed and this ensured improvements were made that benefitted the service.
- Staff worked well together as a team, supporting children's continuity of care.

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 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 warm, consistent and responsive care that fostered their wellbeing. They were sensitively cared for and helped to express their needs. Staff were reassuring, comforting and gentle in their interactions with children.

Children were encouraged to develop their sense of independence by being given opportunities to make choices and do things for themselves. For example, children could choose to play indoors or outdoors, they were encouraged to dress themselves and made some choices at snack and during meals. Children's rights were being explored with children and information shared with parents. Staff were keen to develop this further throughout the school year. This meant children were respected and promoted a sense of belonging.

Children had access to healthy meals and snacks. Overall, the snack and lunch routines were calm and pleasant offering children some opportunities to develop independence skills. During lunch, staff sat with the children which promoted positive social interactions, effective supervision and offered opportunities for role modelling. A salad bar provided an opportunity for children to eat or try new foods. Moving forward we suggested that the leaders review the lunchtime routine to further develop children's independence and self help skills. The majority of parents were happy with the food, but some stated they would like more choice.

Children's wellbeing was supported by personal plans. Information was gathered from parents and used to inform children's care. Staff knew children well and could talk through the supports that were in place for children. To further support children effectively, strategies of support should be clear and monitored over time to secure progress. Parents all agree that they were involved in the personal plan, updating it as and when necessary.

Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs. Staff demonstrated in-depth awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and knew what protocol to follow if a child protection concern arose. Allergies, intolerances and preferences were displayed within the snack area. Accidents and incidents were recorded and reviewed to analysis particular trends. Medication was stored appropriately and paperwork was in place. These systems kept children healthy and safe.

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning.

The layout of the playrooms provided children with space to move around freely and access resources. During free play the children chose to explore resources such as sand, water, blocks, home area and playdoh. The resources available were appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. All children had access to low level storage units, this encouraged them to make choices and decisions of what they wanted to play. We could see children were comfortable in the environment and using the play spaces. This meant that there were opportunities for children to engage in purposeful play and learning.

There was a mix of planned and spontaneous experiences which supported children to learn and develop

through play. These were being documented through planning documents and a floor book. Tracker sheets from the Local Authority were being used to plug gaps within the children's learning. Some examples of the children's voice were captured by staff within the planning cycle. Staff stated that felt more confident with planning, but they were aware that this needed to be further developed. The Local Authority have agreed to support staff around planning for children's progress.

Children's learning stories recorded observations of children's play and learning, which were shared with their families. Children's art work was also included. Some children had relevant next steps recorded along with evidence when this had been met. Staff discussed children's individual learning and progress. Leaders should monitor learning stories to ensure observations were detailed and reflect the learning and development needs of individual children.

Outdoors there were opportunities for risky play and the resources available were appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. Children were having fun with lots to do and explore. Staff should continue to build on the provocations offered to the children both in and outdoors this would ensure they can test their ideas and develop their own play. Staff should be aware of tidying up around the children because this could be disruptive and interrupt their play.

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 experienced a setting that was welcoming. The play areas benefitted from natural light and ventilation. Informative displays in the entrance area effectively encouraged family engagement. Children had a named peg in the cloakroom, supporting their sense of belonging and independence.

Children had space to freely move around indoors and out. Furniture and resources were organised to promote free flow play. Some resources were worn and needed attention especially the rugs and soft furnishings. Staff should monitor the cleanliness of the bathroom area, to ensure it remains a clean, tidy and safe environment for the children. Staff and parents commented that some resources were old, worn and needed replaced.

Staff had worked hard on creating a version of free flow access between the playroom and outside. Children now had the choice of playing inside or out. This routine included children self registering if they were inside or out, this supported staff to know children's whereabouts during the session. Walkie talkies meant staff communicated with each other and this helped to keep children safe.

Outdoors children were involved in their play and worked well in groups. They were supported by staff. They had the freedom to run around, develop their physical skills and be creative. The availability of open-ended resources enabled children to engage their imaginations, develop life skills and spark curiosity. As a result, children were motivated, engaged, confident and having fun. Parents comments that their children enjoyed "Making tools, chalk drawing, going on the slide and climbing frame, digging holes, playing hide and seek, family picnic, sports day" and "Digging, finding bugs, playing in mud kitchen, playing on scooters and in the sand. Whilst another stated that their child had "searched for bugs using a magnifying glass".

Staff evaluated the play environment. However, at times throughout the afternoon some children did not fully engage with the resources or activities available. Staff should review the routine of the day and support children to make choices and lead their own play through a range of interesting and appealing resources and activities. Attention should also be given to creating a quiet space for children to access if they are tired or feel overwhelmed.

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 management team had changed since the last inspection and staff stated that this had created a stability within the team. They felt supported by the leadership team who were keen to include the setting within the school community

Staff had worked hard at developing self-evaluation and quality assurance systems. Improvements had been made to the children accessing outdoors and some aspects of planning for play. Staff understood the relevance of self-evaluation and met regularly to highlight where improvements were needed. Staff told us they felt valued, well-supported and could make suggestions for improvement. Since the last inspection, priorities and improvements have been made at a pace. The service should now take time to embed these systems into practice to ensure outcomes remain positive for children and families.

Staff were beginning to take responsibility for developing areas within the service this included music, language and literacy and numeracy. Staff were enthusiastic about the changes they had made and used children's views to evaluate the experiences in order to improve them. This showed children's ideas and suggestions were beginning to influence change.

General information was shared with parents at drop off and collection times and weekly newsletters. Parents had opportunities to be involved in the service through Stay and Play sessions. Some parents indicated that they would like more information about their child's learning, this was shared with the setting during feedback. The leadership team had identified that more opportunities were needed for parents to be involved in the evaluation of the setting and be included in the improvement planning.

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

Staff were warm, nurturing, and caring. They had worked to create a welcoming environment for children and families. This helped to promote a positive atmosphere for both staff and children. The service was appropriately staffed during the day to ensure positive transitions and communication with families. Parents were very positive about staff and told us that staff were friendly, caring and had a good relationship with the children. They also commented on how positively they handled transitions from home to nursery, especially if children were upset in the mornings.

Staff worked well as a team to ensure the appropriate supervision and support of children. They worked flexibly to support colleagues and breaks did not impact on the experiences for children. Children and families benefitted from staff who were trained, competent and skilled in areas of childcare. Staff had engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on their practice. They were supported to reflect on their training through staff meetings and the professional development review, which was carried out annually. This was impacting positively on outcomes for children.

Regular team meetings with staff and senior leadership team helped support a shared approach to the quality of the service. Staff said that they felt supported in their role and that their wellbeing was considered by their colleagues and the leadership team. Consequently, team morale was improving and staff told us they felt valued, appreciated and had a sense of belonging. This impacted positively on children's experiences.

Staff communicated well with each other to ensure supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. We saw staff sharing information about children and working together to support individual children. Staff had worked hard to ensure children were provided with the choice to play in or outdoors throughout most of the day. This meant staff were responsive to meeting the needs of children.

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

For all children to make progress at a pace that is right for them, the provider should ensure observations and tracking of individuals are focused clearly on strengths, significant learning and specific next steps. This should then inform responsive planning. Planning should be meaningfully evaluated so that there is ongoing understanding of the stage that each child is at in their play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me.' (HSCS 1.27)

This area for improvement was made on 25 September 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff had worked hard on ensuring observations and next steps were relevant to each child. These observations were used to inform planning or individual support for the children. Staff understood the planning cycle and were working with the Local Authority to ensure planning and tracking were a priority for improvement.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children receive a high quality service, the service should ensure robust self evaluation and effective quality assurance systems are developed and implemented to improve outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19)

This area for improvement was made on 25 September 2023.

Action taken since then

Self evaluation and quality assurance systems had been developed and these were being used to improve the outcomes for children. Moving forward, the service should now take time to embed these systems into practice to ensure outcomes remain positive for children and families.

This area for improvement is met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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