

# Gorebridge Family Learning Centre Day Care of Children

Gorebridge Beacon  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
20 June 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Midlothian Sure Start

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003175

**Service no:**  
CS2003013422

## About the service

Midlothian Sure Start, is the provider of Gorebridge Family Learning Centre. The service is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 17 children from birth to not yet of an age to attend primary school.

Gorebridge Family Learning Centre is purpose-built for Early Learning and Childcare, situated within the 'The Beacon', part of Gorebridge community trust. The family learning centre provides open plan play spaces, a kitchen, children's toilets, nappy changing room, cloakroom and direct access to outdoor play spaces.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 17 June 2025 between 09:00 and 17:15. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. We provided feedback to the manager and a representative from the local authority on 20 June 2025.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the 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 and their family members
- spoke with staff and the leadership team
- considered feedback from two families through an online questionnaire
- considered feedback from one member of staff through an online questionnaire
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how the service supports 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

- The warmth, kindness and compassion from staff enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure.
- Children experienced an unhurried, calm and social lunchtime.
- Children's outdoor play spaces were stimulating and developmentally appropriate, supporting children's curiosity and health and wellbeing.
- Positive improvements had been made since the last inspection to ensure the service was well led.
- Staff deployment and staffing levels took account of the skills mix, routines and activities of the day.

## 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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 received warm, caring and nurturing approaches from staff. This helped children feel safe and secure. Families strongly agreed they have a good relationship with staff caring for their children. One family commented, "The staff are so welcoming and warm and happy to answer questions I have and discuss worries and concerns". Another family told us, "My child has formed a good relationship with the staff and feels very comfortable around them and safe". Most staff were responsive to individual children, taking time to genuinely 'listen'. Their positive body language and warm tone of voice effectively communicated that children were being heard and that their voices truly mattered. For instance, when a child was upset coming into the service, staff promptly provided comfort with a 'cuddle,' reassured the child and then gently supported them to join in play with others, while remaining close to the child. As a result, children received the encouragement and reassurance needed from staff, fostering a sense of nurture that actively supported their overall wellbeing.

Children experienced an unhurried, calm and social lunchtime. Staff were attentive to children's needs, providing support as required. For instance, when a child wasn't immediately ready for lunch, staff gently reminded them and provided time, resulting in the child willingly joining the table shortly after. Children benefitted from staff who sat with them during mealtimes, supporting them to self-serve from the table and pour their own drinks, with assistance provided when needed. This approach effectively supported their safety and encouraged positive eating habits. Consequently, mealtimes provided a positive social experience for children while actively promoting their independence. We discussed with the service the value of providing opportunities for children to be involved in the preparation during snack and mealtimes. This would further promote their independence, enhance practical life skills and deepen their understanding of healthy eating.

Menus were varied and balanced in line with best practice guidance. Enough food was available for children to have more when requested and staff responded in a kind manner. Staff were aware of children's individual dietary requirements, allergies and parental choices. This contributed to children's individual needs being met and parental wishes being respected.

The service could review how children remain hydrated throughout the day. Although children had drinks with their meals, they weren't consistently encouraged to stay hydrated at other times. Individual water bottles were available but they hadn't been filled. As a result, there were missed opportunities to support children's consistent hydration and effectively support individual children who required more to drink, as documented in their care plans.

Staff were responsive to children's individual routines, supporting these throughout the day. For example, children who needed a nap were provided with a safe space for sleep with clean linen and their sleep was carefully monitored to ensure their safety. Children benefitted from nurturing and caring approaches during personal care. Staff asked for permission prior to nappy changing and supported children in a way that was right for them. For instance, we observed staff gently encouraging a child who wasn't ready to get changed, providing choice to support their participation in the process. As a result, children's needs were met and their dignity was respected.

Personal planning approach could be further developed to ensure information gathered is consistently used to support children's needs more effectively. A range of documents, when taken together, contributed to children's individual plans. Staff worked collaboratively with families and other professionals to identify appropriate strategies and next steps based on children's needs. This included, meetings with health visitors, attending child planning meetings and dialogue with families. One family commented, "We can always have a good chat, staff love sharing how my child is doing and hearing how they are getting on when at home or holiday". While strategies had been identified and documented for most children these were not consistently implemented or effectively reviewed to ensure positive outcomes for all children. The service acknowledged the potential to further develop personal plans to ensure that all information gathered is consistently used to support children's needs. Strengthening the personal planning approach could result in these plans becoming meaningful working documents that consistently inform daily practice. A previous area for improvement in place had not been fully met, we have reworded the area for improvement to reflect progress made. **(See Area for improvement 1)**

## Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were meaningfully involved in leading their play and learning. They moved freely from indoors to outdoors throughout the day, this benefitted their wellbeing, promoted their choice and independence. One family commented, "My child absolutely loves nursery, it gives them a free environment to be themselves and explore new things they might not get to do at home". Staff were mostly responsive to children's ideas and interests. For example, movement and action songs like, "Ring a Roses" and "Hokey Cokey" were actively supported by staff throughout the session, particularly outdoors. Children's enthusiastic shouts of, "more, again, again!" were met with responsive repetitions from staff. Staff understood children's stages of development and provided opportunities that enhanced children's rhythm, movement and language. These experiences effectively fostered a strong sense of being together among the children. As a result, children were actively engaged, having fun and developing positive relationships.

There was a balance of spontaneous and planned experiences. For instance, seasonal and cultural celebrations were part of a yearly overview, this supported children's learning of the wider world. Staff had been supported by the local authority to build confidence with 'In-the-moment planning'. Their feedback was positive, one member of staff commented, "I have more knowledge on how to plan for children's learning experiences, and how to extend children's learning through the environment". Observations of children's play and development were documented and added to children's learning journals. This was a positive step towards capturing spontaneous learning and planning individual next steps learning and development. Families told us they were, "always kept updated about their child's progress". Moving forward staff could further develop their skills in identifying what learning is happening, how they can take this forward and how this links to children's over all development.

Children benefitted from a range of experiences that supported their play and learning. Most staff interactions were positive; they used effective questioning and showed a genuine interest in their play. These responsive interactions helped children feel respected and included. For instance, outdoors children were jumping from a bench around a tree onto a bean bag. Staff supported children to extend their skills by adding a plank of wood, allowing them to walk up onto the bench. As a result, children were actively developing their gross motor skills, balance and coordination. Children who were less confident were positively encouraged to join in and offered praise. Those who requested help to climb onto or be pushed on the swing were readily assisted, as staff were well-deployed to support engagement and play.

We discussed with the manager the importance of reviewing play spaces and resources to add greater breadth and depth to children's play and learning. For instance, during the inspection indoors the water tray had its lid on with no water available and the painting area could have been better resourced as there was limited paint and paper for children to be creative. Staff were responsive to our feedback and enhanced the provision during the inspection. Moving forward, staff could regularly review spaces and experiences to ensure all areas of the environment consistently support rich and engaging play and learning.

### Areas for improvement

1. Strategies should be well understood by all staff and used consistently to support children's wellbeing, understanding and emotional security. By doing this, children would experience more predictable, sensitive care that helps them feel safe and supported throughout their day.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

### How good is our setting?

**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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The service had maintained a comfortable, warm and inviting environment since the last inspection. Small lamps and soft furnishings created a homely and cosy environment. One parent commented, "They have a reading corner that is quiet and comfortable". The overall environment fostered a calm atmosphere, effectively supporting children to feel nurtured and at ease. Small touches had been added such as, a family photo display in the home corner that children could interact with. We observed a child sitting with their family photo at the breakfast table, clearly finding comfort in having this with them. This thoughtful detail not only fostered a sense of belonging but also actively supported children's transition. This sent a strong message to children that they matter.

Resources and furniture were developmentally appropriate. Positive improvements had been made to the outdoor play space since the last inspection. For instance, a large sandpit had been developed, where many children were having fun using diggers to fill and empty tubs and make tracks. One parent commented, "My child loves the sand pit in the garden". Another told us, "There is an amazing outdoor section to help with lots of physical skills whether it's using a scooter, balance/stepping stones, push along bikes, sandpit, water station, ball games etc". Some positive changes had also been made to the indoor environment. Through observations, staff noticed children were keen to climb on furniture, prompting them to introduce a small wooden frame with a slide to provide safe indoor climbing opportunities. As discussed in 'Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning' we encouraged the service to continuously reflect on and adapt spaces and resources. This would contribute to ongoing developments of rich, enabling environments to add breadth and depth to children's play and learning.

The setting and equipment were safe, secure and well-maintained. Staff carried out daily safety checks and ongoing risk-benefit assessments as part of their routines. Staff and the management team confidently shared their reporting process for maintenance and a new maintenance member of staff has been employed to manage day to day maintenance issues. High boundary fencing was in good repair, secure gates and a video entry system into the service further contributed to keeping children safe. Additionally, staff communicated effectively during children's transitions into and out of the service, ensuring registers were updated and regular headcounts were undertaken throughout the day. As a result, children were safe and accounted for.

The environment was clean and clutter-free. Staff carried out effective cleaning procedures throughout the setting in line with policies and procedures. This contributed to limiting the spread of infection. Handwashing sinks were easily accessible in the playroom and staff actively encouraged effective handwashing with children. This reduced the spread of infection and helped children learn good hand hygiene.

Accidents and incidents had been managed effectively. Appropriate first aid was provided, further advice sought when required. These were documented on the digital app and families were able to view these instantly. As a result, appropriate care was provided to children and families were kept informed.

## 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 service's shared vision, values and aims positively shaped practice, fostering a culture of respect, kindness and nurture. Important to the wider Sure Start vision, the service prioritised family engagement and support through various learning programs, including perinatal groups, employability support and open kindergarten sessions. The person-centred and inclusive approach strengthened relationships and significantly contributed to positive outcomes for children and their families.



Families strongly agreed they were meaningfully involved in improving the service. One family shared how they had enjoyed the recent easter activity day and looked forward to more opportunities to spend time in the service. Monthly newsletters, conversations with families and digital platforms were used to share updates, information and initiatives. For instance, the service recently developed the garden, including building a new sandpit. The local community positively responded to requests from the service for sand. As a result, children's experiences were enhanced and the new play and learning space in the environment was successfully completed for their enjoyment and development.

The improvement plan, despite being in its early stages, had already positively impacted service development. The service had experienced several changes since the last inspection and a new staff team were in place. However, notable improvements had been made, largely driven by the new peripatetic manager's strong commitment to positive change. Their proactive approach to enhancing the outdoor environment, interactions, observations and planning had already demonstrated improved outcomes for children. The manager's active engagement and responsiveness to feedback further highlighted their capacity to improve the service. Regularly reflecting on and evaluating progress in staff meetings, will be key for driving sustained positive change and developing staff relationships and confidence. This approach would help identify new gaps and guide future actions.

Quality assurance systems, including robust systems for auditing and reviewing paperwork and the environment, could be further improved. Although key documents such as, individual personal plans and healthcare plans had been updated, information gathered was not consistently analysed or reviewed by staff. This meant not all children were receiving the support they needed to learn and develop.

### 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

There was enough staff to comfortably meet children's needs throughout the day. Staff deployed themselves effectively across the environment and moved around to ensure they were in the right place to support children. For instance, between indoors and outdoors and during mealtimes. One member of staff commented, "We all work well as a team and communicate well". Consequently, effective staff deployment and ongoing communication between staff ensured children were effectively supervised and supported.

The warm and caring staff team created a welcoming and positive environment for children and families, where children experienced a settled atmosphere. One parent commented, "The staff are lovely from the moment I drop my child off to the moment I collect them and are very good at keeping me updated and answer any questions I have". The relatively new team expressed success in building strong, positive relationships with families. While staff told us they felt well-supported by colleagues and management.

Some staff were qualified with a range of strengths and experience. The national induction resource was used along with monthly meetings and daily 'catch ups' to provide ongoing support for new staff into the service. One member of staff commented, "Monthly meetings with my mentor to discuss my progress and what I have been learning has supported my practice". A training calendar was in place for staff, this contributed to ongoing continuing learning and professional development. Staff shared their positive experiences of recent First Aid and Child Protection Training and the impact this had on their confidence. As a result, children experienced care and support from a staff team who were trained, competent and skilled.

## 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

To ensure children receive consistent individualised care and support, information gathered about children should be used to develop appropriate strategies to meet children's needs and support developmental progress. These strategies should be shared with all staff to ensure a consistent approach to care and support.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

**This area for improvement was made on 25 April 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Positive changes had been implemented to develop children's personal plans, most information gathered about children was used to develop strategies. Children's strategies were documented across a range of documents. However, not all staff were aware of strategies and these were not used consistently for all children. As a result, children did not always receive consistent care to support their overall wellbeing. Further examples are detailed in 'Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support'.

**This area for improvement has not been met.**

However, we have reworded the area for improvement to reflection the progress made. (See 'Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support' Area for improvement 1)

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's learning and development, the manager and staff should ensure children experience high quality interactions, play and learning.

This should include but not be limited to, ensuring staff are knowledgeable and trained in using effective commenting and questioning to scaffold learning and extend children's thinking. Whilst ensuring high quality observations and next steps are recorded to support children's learning, development and progress.

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

'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30); and

'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 April 2024.**

**Action taken since then**

Since the last inspection the service had made positive improvements, ensuring children mainly experienced high-quality interactions that supported their play, learning and development. Staff effectively commented on play and used effective questioning to extend thinking.

Staff are becoming more confident in recording significant observations and next steps using focus child observations, as part of 'Planning in the moment'. This had contributed to monitoring and tracking children's learning and development. Further examples are detailed in 'Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning'. Ongoing support from the local authority and staff training will further strengthen this practice.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

**Previous area for improvement 3**

For children to experience high quality care and support to meet their needs, the provider should ensure that long term staff absence is planned for and staff deployment considers staff's knowledge, skills and experience.

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

'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27); and

'I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity' (HSCS 4.16).

**This area for improvement was made on 25 April 2024.**

**Action taken since then**

The organisation effectively managed staffing by employing their own bank staff who were already familiar with the organisation's policies, procedures and values. They had also proactively planned for long-term absences. For instance, a qualified member of staff from another service within the organisation was identified to cover a period of planned absence within the service. As a result, staff deployment and overall staffing levels consistently considered the necessary skills mix, daily routines and activities to effectively support children. Further examples are detailed in 'Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment'.

**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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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