Gosforth C of E Primary School and Nursery

Unique reference number (URN): 2886003

Address: Gosforth Nursery, Gosforth, Seascale, CA20 1AZ

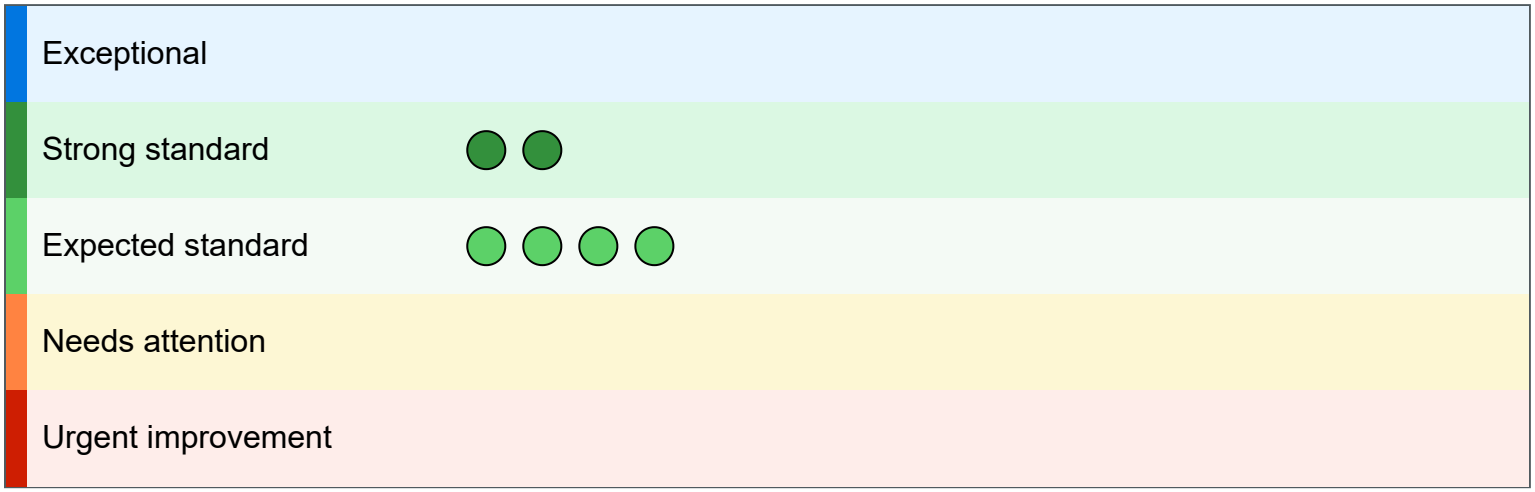
Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 23/03/2026

Registers: EYR, CCR, VCR

Registered person: Gosforth C of E Primary School

Inspection report: 6 October 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Strong standard

Staff consistently model kindness, respect and compassion, creating a positive environment where children understand expectations. They build trusting relationships and help children to develop friendships, take turns and consider others. Staff embed these expectations into everyday routines, helping children to understand their responsibilities and behave considerately. For example, children carefully carry a large and heavy pumpkin to help tidy up, proudly telling staff, 'Tidying up'. Staff celebrate children's contributions, developing their confidence, independence and sense of responsibility.

Staff use stories to deepen children's understanding of feelings, fairness and empathy. For example, when sharing the story of 'The Mole Who Wanted More', older children listen attentively and consider why the bird feels sad and wants to be free. Children explain that the bird would be sad in a cage because it wants to fly. Staff build on these responses to extend children's thinking about fairness and how actions affect others. They actively use books and visual resources to help children recognise, name and manage emotions. Staff respond sensitively in the moment, saying, 'You look sad, are you okay?' They consistently reinforce 'kind hands' and use calm and clear reminders to help children to manage their behaviour and resolve disagreements. As a result, children develop empathy, manage their feelings and play cooperatively.

Leaders take a rigorous approach to promoting regular attendance. They build positive partnerships with families and adjust arrangements where possible to help children access their full entitlement of hours. Leaders are strengthening attendance tracking to work more closely with families and support consistent attendance. This helps children to benefit from secure relationships and the full range of learning experiences available to them.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders place children's health, safety and wellbeing at the heart of nursery life. Staff work extremely closely with parents and carers, building secure attachments and understanding children's needs. They partner with parents to maintain familiar home routines, helping every child feel safe, valued and included. Staff nurture emotional connections through gentle interactions. For example, staff cuddle children and sing softly together before children choose their preferred sleep mats. Staff follow children's cues and respect their choices, strengthening trust and belonging.

Staff carefully tailor care to individual needs, following safe-sleeping guidance and carefully managing allergies and food textures. They work with parents on feeding and weaning plans, provide nutritious meals and ensure fresh drinking water remains accessible. Staff encourage babies and younger children to explore food and feed themselves, celebrating their growing independence. Through patient teaching and modelling, staff help children to manage toileting with increasing skill. Staff provide children with allergies with resources in sealed zip-lock bags. This enables them to explore textures safely, satisfy their curiosity and discover alongside friends.

Staff nurture children's confidence through outdoor exploration. They provide wellies and splash suits so children can splash through puddles, explore the world around them and discover nature in all weathers. Babies practise crawling and pulling themselves to stand, while older children climb, balance and ride bicycles. When children find shape sorters tricky, staff break tasks into small steps, offer hand-over-hand guidance where appropriate and give specific praise. This focused support helps children to persevere, experience success and master new skills. These warm and responsive experiences help children to express their feelings, build resilience and thrive with confidence, independence and a deep sense of belonging.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children typically make progress from their individual starting points and develop knowledge and skills across the areas of learning. The inclusive curriculum reflects their interests and developmental needs. This gives all children, including those attending part-time, access to a broad range of experiences. As a result, children achieve well overall.

Children are curious and motivated learners who become absorbed in play. They use dough and pasta to create structures, exploring shape, texture and how materials join. As they explore autumn leaves, children use their senses to notice how they feel and smell, developing vocabulary as they discover.

Children use their imaginations and creativity confidently. They build towers that become pirate ships and turn tubes into pretend telescopes. They persevere when things do not go as planned and celebrate their achievements. Babies show growing memory and understanding as they copy clapping and identify familiar objects, such as stars, holding them up and recalling where they belong. Older children listen carefully to stories, anticipating what might happen and sharing their ideas as stories unfold.

Children behave exceptionally well as they play cooperatively. They turn wooden swings into horses, develop safety rules and stop to let friends have a turn, showing care and patience. Children are typically ready for transitions within the setting and towards school. While some aspects of teaching are not yet fully consistent, children continue to make positive progress and achieve well overall.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

As the nursery and school continue through the merger, leaders are developing a shared approach that builds on the rich learning experiences already available for children. Overall, leaders have an accurate understanding of curriculum and teaching. They have a clear and ambitious action plan to strengthen it further.

Teaching is typically purposeful and matched to children's needs. Staff use ongoing assessment to understand starting points, interests and developmental stages, generally adapting experiences accordingly. Children eagerly explore pumpkins of different sizes and

weights, comparing them and using mathematical language. Babies investigate their textures, colours and shapes. Staff explicitly teach mathematical concepts through counting, comparing, patterns, shape and measure, including during everyday routines.

Staff typically teach communication and language well, supported through songs, rhymes, stories, conversations and new vocabulary. Staff use family photos and activities, such as building homes, to develop children's vocabulary. They encourage children to talk about important people and recognise that families can be different. A particular strength is the rich use of the outdoor environment. Children enjoy fresh air, explore natural materials and learn through real experiences, developing physical skills, language, mathematical thinking and understanding of the world. The curriculum is sustained and sequenced thoughtfully, enabling babies and children to revisit and build on what they know and can do. This develops children's knowledge and skills for future learning and a successful transition to school.

Leaders recognise that some children require more specialised support. Not all staff yet receive specific training to strengthen their knowledge. Consequently, teaching is not always adapted as precisely as possible. At times, younger children and those requiring additional support need more help to sustain and develop their ideas in play, such as when exploring the train track.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders and staff create a welcoming and inclusive nursery where children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing barriers to learning or wellbeing, feel valued. Staff gather information from families and use their observations and assessments to understand children's strengths, interests, starting points and individual needs. This helps them to identify children's needs early and provide appropriate support.

Leaders monitor children's progress through ongoing assessment and regular reviews. They work with families and external professionals to identify children's needs, agree support and review its impact. Staff training strengthens their understanding of communication, interaction and emotional development.

Generally, staff break children's learning into small steps and make reasonable adjustments to routines, activities, resources and the environment. For instance, children benefit from individual and small-group support, with staff using visual prompts, gestures, signs, modelling and repetition to help them to understand and participate. Staff generally use simple language and responsive interactions to encourage children to develop their communication skills to express their needs. These approaches help children to manage routines and engage in learning. However, staff do not yet use communication strategies consistently across the setting. Consequently, children who benefit from visual or non-verbal communication do not always have equal opportunities to understand what is happening or communicate their needs.

Leaders use additional funding purposefully. Children benefit from focused adult support, smaller-group experiences and resources matched to their individual needs and interests.

Leaders review the impact of this support on children's progress, helping children to develop their skills and confidence.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Since the merger, leaders and those responsible for governance are building on the nursery's strengths to develop a well-sequenced curriculum from babies through to the end of primary education. They recognise this work is ongoing and are developing systems to track children's progress while keeping play, positive relationships and children's interests central to practice.

Leaders value their highly qualified, experienced and dedicated staff team. Staff feel valued and supported and remain committed to children's learning and wellbeing. They use their knowledge of children to identify individual needs and plan appropriate experiences. Staff welcome opportunities to share their expertise as the nursery and school develop their approaches. Leaders manage change with staff wellbeing and workload in mind.

Leaders link training to improvement goals, including school readiness. Staff have completed training to strengthen their understanding of children's oral language, communication and literacy development. However, leaders have not yet established regular staff supervision or matched professional learning closely enough to individual needs. This makes it harder to identify the support staff need, particularly when working with children developing their speech, language and communication skills and those requiring specialist support. Leaders are helping staff to embed curriculum changes and use communication strategies consistently throughout routines and play, enabling all children to benefit from effective interactions and make progress.

Leaders are introducing a central recording system to bring children's information together, track attendance and progress, and identify gaps in learning. The system aims to strengthen safeguarding oversight by helping leaders identify patterns and monitor concerns. Staff recognise its potential to reduce workload over time, although they are still developing confidence in using it.

Leaders and staff work effectively with parents and other professionals to support children, including those who experience barriers to learning or disadvantage. Parents value regular communication and feel listened to, particularly when children have additional needs or health requirements. Staff share information with families and professionals to provide consistent support. Parents recognise the positive impact staff have on children's confidence, security and development.

Compulsory Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Compulsory Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Compulsory Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

Voluntary Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the voluntary part of Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Voluntary Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children arrive happy, welcomed by caring staff, who know them exceptionally well. Babies and children new to the nursery settle extremely well. Staff are a real strength in this nursery. They build secure relationships and respond sensitively to children's needs. Children feel safe, valued and confident to explore. Babies share family photos with their friends, developing their identities and sense of belonging. Children's curiosity shines through their play. Babies investigate pots and pans, discovering that objects inside create sounds. Older children use dough and pasta to make stands for balancing lolly sticks,

adapting their ideas when constructions wobble. Recognising their marks, they introduce additional tools to explore further. Skilled staff follow children's interests, allowing them time to investigate, solve problems and persevere. Children build on their starting points, developing skills, resilience and confidence.

Children eagerly share their discoveries, chasing leaves and showing them to less familiar adults. They draw on their knowledge of swordfish and otters to invent imaginative stories together. Staff listen carefully and extend children's thinking. Children explore new experiences, ask questions and learn from trickier tasks.

Children develop positive relationships and show kindness. They pass paper towels to others, share cars to sustain play and say, 'Excuse me', when asking to join their friends. Children make room for others, showing respect and consideration. Staff model kindness and support children to manage their feelings and play harmoniously.

Children thrive in this inclusive environment, where staff typically recognise their individual needs and provide appropriate support. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those facing barriers to their learning or wellbeing and those requiring additional support. Every child is valued and encouraged to participate, make choices and develop independence. Children develop communication through books, songs and imaginative play. Staff typically support children to express their thoughts and develop their language.

Children feel safe, valued and connected to their community as they share family photos, learn about their friends and welcome others into their play. They explore ideas, persevere through tasks, develop new skills and celebrate their achievements. Warm relationships and meaningful experiences help children to belong, thrive and achieve, building the confidence they need for the next stages of their lives.

Next steps

- Leaders should establish regular supervision sessions to identify staff's individual development needs and provide targeted professional learning that strengthens their ability to support children's learning, inclusion and achievement.
- Leaders should strengthen staff's consistent use of effective communication strategies throughout routines and play, particularly to support children developing their speech, language and communication skills and those requiring more specialist support.
- Leaders should continue to work with the experienced early years team to embed curriculum changes, share expertise and develop a well-sequenced curriculum from babies through to the end of primary education. They should ensure teaching is adapted to meet children's individual needs and stages of development, while maintaining the distinctive nature of early years practice.

About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders and governors, staff, the special educational needs coordinator, parents and carers and children during the inspection.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

Inspector:
Karen James

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): 2886003

Address:
Gosforth Nursery
Gosforth
Seascale
CA20 1AZ

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 23/03/2026

Registered person: Gosforth C of E Primary School

Register(s): EYR, CCR, VCR

Operating hours: Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 07:30 - 17:00

Local authority: Cumberland

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 6 October 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

1 to 4

Total number of places

52

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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