

The Glasgow Academy - Milngavie Nursery and Kindergarten Day Care of Children

Mugdock Road
Milngavie
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 November 2025

Service provided by:
Glasgow Academics War Memorial
Trust

Service provider number:
SP2003003598

Service no:
CS2003016232

About the service

The Glasgow Academy - Milngavie Nursery and Kindergarten is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 48 children aged from three years to not yet attending primary school. The service works in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council to provide early learning and childcare. The service operates from within a primary school in the Milngavie area of East Dunbartonshire. The accommodation is comprised of two main playrooms and two outdoor zones including an enclosed soft surfaced play area and a natural forest garden. The service is close to primary schools, a local park and main transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 November 2025 between 09:15 and 17:00. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children attending the service
- received electronic feedback from 14 families whose children attended the service
- received electronic feedback from seven staff who worked in the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- We found that staff were motivated, well led and passionate about improving outcomes for all children.
- Personal planning systems were robust and consistently monitored to support children's wellbeing.
- The importance of recruiting and retaining a stable and skilled team was recognised by the management team as essential to the wellbeing of children.
- The provider's approach to supporting children's play and learning across international boundaries was outstanding and sector leading.

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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	6 - Excellent
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The leadership approach we observed in place was clearly founded on principles of high-quality care and learning, active engagement with children and their families and a vibrant improvement culture. The management team were committed to providing the highest standards for children, and families. The value based vision and aims of the nursery and kindergarten were embedded in the everyday life of the setting and informed staff practice. The manager and staff were committed to including all stakeholders in the design and review of their vision, values and aims. These reflected the high aspirations of the children and families who used the service.

Staff engaged meaningfully with self evaluation. Their shared reflection had been underpinned by a new national quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sector. This included the selective use of a wide range of challenge questions to reflect on their practice and assess progress against national improvement framework quality indicators. This contributed to a culture of professional dialogue and collective responsibility for improvement.

The manager had created conditions where all staff felt increasingly confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process. A variety of leadership roles had been established, each linked to different subject areas within the early years curriculum. These included literacy, numeracy and mathematics, health and wellbeing, science, technologies, expressive arts and social studies. It included a philosophy for children programme that involved using stories, images, or play to spark open-ended, age-appropriate discussions about big ideas. Children had opportunities to explore concepts such as fairness, identity, or feelings. This helped to build children's thinking, communication, and empathy as well as reasoning and listening skills. The overall leadership approach ensured children experienced a wide range of rich and stimulating learning opportunities. It promoted children's critical thinking, language skills, problem-solving, and creativity across all areas of the curriculum.

The importance of recruiting and retaining a stable and skilled team was recognised by the management team as essential to the wellbeing of children and staff. Staff were recruited in a way that was informed by national guidance on safer recruitment practices. The manager ensured that new staff were safely recruited and that they understood their responsibilities within the team. The nursery had a well considered induction programme. It was thorough and personalised to meet the different roles within the team. As a result of effective staff induction processes, the manager had built a skilled and confident team capable of sustaining improved outcomes for children.

Children play and learn 6 - Excellent

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as excellent where aspects of performance were outstanding and sector leading.

Children were making exceptional progress in their learning as a result of outstandingly high quality play experiences. They were fully engaged in a wide variety of exciting and innovative experiences which ensured development of skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge. Staff worked hard to provide high quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements.

Within indoor and outdoor play spaces we observed children happy and engaged, with examples of children sustaining their involvement in individual play experiences for varied periods within the daily routine. One parent commented on the range of play experiences on offer: "Litter picking, fire building, tree climbing, raft and boat building, pretend play, playing on a swing, skeleton building at Halloween." Another commented on the rich variety of outdoor play opportunities: "Weekly play in the moors, doing campfire, cooking and learning about safety around fire, rubbish collection, trip to the library or local shops in town. Trips in the mini bus to the museum or the botanic gardens. Trip with parents to the zoo in the bus. Walk to the pet shop in town." The learning activities available to children supported them to feel confident in their play, demonstrating curiosity and enjoyment across a wide range of experiences. The range of engaging play experiences available helped promote the staff's shared aspirations for children to be successful.

We found that staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences for individual children. This supported staff to talk critically, reflectively and evaluatively about the quality of play experiences on offer. The management team monitored the quality of staff observations to ensure they were used to support planning of children's play and learning in ways that were meaningful to children. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn. Staff engaged with us in meaningful professional dialogue about future opportunities to develop children's sense of ownership of their self chosen collaborative play projects. This demonstrated their commitment to continuous improvement to get it right for children.

At the time of inspection, the nursery was engaged in an international partnership with Nehru World School in Noida, India, to support an innovative, research-based early years curriculum. Noida, a satellite city of Delhi within India's National Capital Region (NCR), is home to a programme aiming to combine high-quality early years education with extended care for up to 250 children. A key aspect of this collaboration involved the forest kindergarten coordinator, who played a central role in developing the Indian preschool's outdoor play curriculum. This approach was adapted from the highly successful forest kindergarten model already implemented across the provider's Glasgow services. Other staff contributed through international exchanges and seminars, deepening mutual understanding of educational approaches and cultural perspectives. Children benefited from opportunities to learn about different childhoods and celebrate Indian cultural events. Overall, this work strengthened play-based learning experiences and wellbeing for children across international boundaries. It represented sector-leading practice from which other early learning and childcare services can draw inspiration.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children across all playrooms experienced warm, consistent, and responsive care. We observed that children were safe, sensitively cared for, and supported to express their needs. All of the parents that completed our survey strongly agreed that they were happy with the care and support their child received in the service. Staff engaged in daily reflective conversations to adapt their practice to children's evolving needs and development.

Room layouts had been thoughtfully adapted to create diverse spaces where children could socialise, play in small groups, or spend time alone if they wished. This approach positively impacted children's ability to regulate emotions and build social skills. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of supportive transitions and regularly assessed individual needs to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies. A parent told us: "Staff have been very welcoming, they've shown interest in how our child has been settling in and encourage discussion through the journal app. In person, they have been more than happy to discuss any matter with us." Another parent commented: "The staff are extremely professional and engender a lot of trust. They know my son well, have invited my wife and me in for meetings to support him settling in. At these meetings they demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of our son and have reassured us about his progress, both academically and socially." Staff used Realising the Ambition and national early learning and childcare quality indicators to reflect on and improve their approaches. These practices ensured children experienced a nurturing environment that promoted emotional security and supported their social development.

Staff recognised that meal times provided rich opportunities to connect with children and support their growth and development. Children's food choices were nutritious, culturally appropriate and safely prepared to account for any specific dietary needs, allergies or intolerances. Meal times supported children to develop independence and self-help skills as they made choices and engaged in meaningful conversations about food and health. As a result, children were able to build meaningful relationships and develop important social and language skills.

Personal planning systems were robust and consistently monitored to support children's wellbeing. We reviewed a sample of plans and found them meaningful, regularly updated, and reflective of each child's care, support, and learning needs. Staff worked closely with families, involving them in decisions about their child's care and development. This enabled the relevant staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. A parent told us: "There are formal meetings during the year to review our child's progress and a clear report provided highlighting strengths and growth opportunities. There are regular "family hours" where parents are invited to participate in their child's regular activities - this is excellent." We discussed with staff how personal planning approaches could be further streamlined to provide an up to date summary of ongoing key support, care and learning needs for every child. This can enhance the information sharing systems already in place that ensured every child received personalised care that supported their growth, resilience, and ability to thrive.

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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	6 - Excellent
Playing, learning and developing	6 - Excellent
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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