

Carlibar Nursery and PSADU Day Care of Children

Carlibar Primary School
Carlibar Road
Barrhead
Glasgow
G78 1BD

Telephone: 01415 774 100

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 January 2026

Service provided by:
East Renfrewshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003372

Service no:
CS2006131164

About the service

Carlibar Nursery and PSADU is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 90 children 3 years and over within Carlibar Family Centre. To provide a care service to a maximum of 25 children 3 years and over within the Preschool Assessment and Development Unit. The age range of the children will be from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school. 68 children were registered with the service during our inspection.

The service operates from the Carlibar Campus in Barrhead, East Renfrewshire. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities. The building has a secure entrance, spacious playrooms, dedicated classroom for children attending the PSADU and access to additional spaces within the campus. Children benefit from direct access to a secure outdoors garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19th and 20th January 2026. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors 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 children using the service
- Gathered feedback from twenty six families through online questionnaires
- 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 the core assurances.

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

- A strong culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement was promoted by the nursery leadership team.
- Quality assurance processes should be reviewed to establish robust systems to ensure compliance with guidance and legislation.
- Children could confidently make choices and lead their own play and learning at the nursery and PSADU.
- The team should continue with plans to further develop the planning cycle, assessment and observations in the nursery and PSADU.
- Children experienced consistently warm, nurturing, and responsive interactions from staff.
- Staff had created a welcoming, respectful, safe and supportive space for children and their families.

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	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

Leadership 4 – Good

Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The nursery team, including the senior leadership team, demonstrated a strong commitment to the shared campus vision, values and aims: "Together we nurture, learn and shine." Children, families, and staff were meaningfully involved in the recent review and redesign of these guiding principles. The updated values were clearly embedded in daily practice, reflected in the nurturing, inclusive and rights-based interactions observed across the setting. One parent told us, "The staff are attentive and supportive, and they create a warm and welcoming environment." Another parent told us, "I feel recognised, welcome and the staff always take an interest and make time."

The nursery leadership team engaged well during the inspection; they demonstrated open, transparent, and effective communication. They had an awareness of areas requiring development in the service and were committed to securing improvements. A strong culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement was promoted by the nursery leadership team. Staff had begun working collaboratively with the new quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sector to evaluate practice. Staff told us they felt fully included in the improvement cycle and motivated to contribute to the nursery's ongoing development. One staff member told us, "The whole staff team meet regularly to discuss evaluating and reflecting on our practice, next steps for developing and improving the nursery."

Family views were actively gathered through annual questionnaires, conversations, and engagement during parental events. Parents also contributed through the parent committee, providing suggestions that helped shape improvements across the campus. Children expressed their views informally through daily interactions, and staff routinely responded to their ideas and interests. We highlighted there was scope to establish a formalised approach to capturing and analysing children's voices, ensuring their feedback meaningfully influenced planning, provision, and future improvements.

The nursery leadership team promoted a collaborative learning culture where staff had autonomy in their champion roles. The team within the nursery were afforded time and space for sharing knowledge and support for continued professional development and personal growth. This empowered them to influence developments and share responsibility for improving outcomes for children. This approach supported staff accountability and strengthened collective ownership of maintaining high standards across the service. We asked the nursery leadership team to consider protected time for staff within the PSADU to ensure equity across the service.

The team demonstrated a positive capacity for ongoing improvement. Previous priorities and achievements were evident in practice, with staff and the nursery leadership team able to reflect on the impact of changes for children and families. The current pace of change supported sustainable and meaningful development within the service. With outcomes for children at the heart.

Quality assurance and moderation activities were distributed across the nursery leadership team. We identified gaps in some of the quality assurance and moderation processes. These included inconsistencies in monitoring medication, accident and incident audits, care plans, observations and next steps.

Strengthening these processes and procedures will support greater consistency and compliance with legislation and best practice guidance. We discussed the importance of ensuring all staff undertaking delegated roles have a sound knowledge and awareness of the process and underpinning guidance or legislation. The nursery leadership team agreed to review this, and support further learning and development in quality assurance roles. The nursery leadership team agreed to progress opportunities for moderation activities across the nursery and PSADU leadership team to support a robust and holistic approach to quality assurance and quality control in the campus.

A review of staff Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC) registrations highlighted some discrepancies, including one staff member who was no longer registered and others who had left the service but remained on the service's SSSC list. The Head Teacher took immediate action to address our concerns and discrepancies. The nursery leadership team had commenced plans to revise their quality assurance calendar to ensure routine SSSC registration checks were established to mitigate against further discrepancies.

New staff shared that they felt welcomed, supported, and included in the team. New staff members were allocated a key person to guide them through East Renfrewshire Council's induction materials and service procedures. Staff expressed a shared sense of responsibility for supporting induction and helping new colleagues settle into their roles. This approach supported consistent high quality outcomes for children.

The team promoted a positive, respectful, and inclusive ethos during interactions with children, families, and each other. Staff told us they felt well supported by an approachable and visible leadership team. This positive culture contributed to a motivated and engaged workforce, which was a key strength of the setting. One staff member told us, "We have an excellent management team and a headteacher who is warm and approachable to staff". Another staff member told us, "Our leaders have been very supportive and have an open-door policy."

Children play and learn 4 – Good

Playing, learning, and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children were happy, settled and having fun. We observed children confidently make choices and lead their own play and learning. Children enjoyed playing in the mud kitchen outdoors, building structures with magnetic shapes and blocks, reading stories, dressing up as doctors and baking scones. Staff were skilled at supporting children to make decisions and extend their thinking, without directing their play, through effective questioning. Children were keen to showcase their robot Steve, which they had been creating in the junk model area, over an extended period of time with staff. This approach encouraged a sense of wonder and excitement in children's play experiences. One parent told us "My child is involved in different activities set out by the nursery to develop their skills."

Children accessed a broad and well considered range of indoor and outdoor resources that supported early literacy and numeracy. Open ended materials encouraged exploration and sustained engagement which sparked children's curiosity, creativity and problem solving skills. Experiences such as woodwork, baking and woodland adventures enriched the curriculum and enabled children to develop their confidence, independence, and practical skills whilst engaging in risk beneficial play. One parent told us "My child is very supported by all staff and engaged in a range of activities each day." We encouraged the team to continue to build on the range of opportunities for children to deepen their learning with digital technology.

Children's achievements were recognised and celebrated through praise, encouragement and visual displays. The 'spotlight' display highlighted individual successes, supporting children's sense of pride and belonging in the nursery. Parents were encouraged to contribute to seesaw and share children's achievements from home, helping strengthen continuity in learning. Some parents told us they would like more information shared through seesaw to show their children's play, learning and achievements at nursery.

Responsive planning was a strength for the nursery and PSADU. We found staff were skilled at listening to and recognising children's ideas, interests and personal preferences. This meant children were motivated to engage in the opportunities and experiences available. Planning within the nursery and PSADU included backdrop planning sheets created by the teacher and in the moment planning sheets completed by staff in their allocated areas. Planning recorded was linked to the curriculum, Meta skills and "I can" statements. Within the PSASU "I can" statements were individualised to children attending each session. Planning within the PSADU was structured to support children to feel safe and understand the routine of the day with the effective use of visual aids.

During sampling of children's plans we found it was not always clear how children's progression pathways or individual next steps were identified and planned for. The team had recently introduced a Fact-Story-Action process to record children's progress and to identify any targeted supports and strategies, however this was at an early stage and not yet fully embedded.

We encouraged the service to continue with plans to strengthen their planning cycle to ensure it included consistent, high quality, purposeful observations and assessments that reflect children's progressions and identifies clear next steps. By developing more consistent and individualised observations and next steps, practitioners will be better able to further support children to lead their own play and learning in ways that are responsive to their unique abilities, interests, needs and enabling children to progress at their own pace.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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 experienced consistently warm, nurturing, and responsive interactions. Staff demonstrated a deep understanding of children's emotional needs and engaged with them in ways that promoted kindness, compassion, and a sense of belonging. Staff listened attentively, took time to talk with children, and responded sensitively to their cues and interests. Their responsive engagement in play supported rich relationships and contributed to a fun, emotionally supportive learning environment. One parent told us, "The staff are so nurturing and kind to the children". Another parent told us "Everyone is kind, friendly, and approachable, which creates a very positive and welcoming atmosphere"

Staff and the nursery leadership team demonstrated a strong understanding of child development and the effects of adverse childhood experiences. Care routines were flexible, respectful, and tailored to each child's individual needs and preferences. Staff were aware of children's individual medical needs, with medication stored and administered safely. We asked the team to continue with plans to transfer consent forms to the updated template recently circulated by the local authority to ensure compliance with best practice guidance. Staff were highly attuned to children's emotions and responded with sensitivity during personal care.

Children demonstrated confidence in seeking help from familiar adults, reflecting strong, trusting relationships. One parent told us, "Staff are attentive, supportive and responsive to my child's needs."

Children benefitted from relaxed and sociable mealtimes that supported their independence and helped develop life skills. The team had recently reviewed and made changes to the lunchtime routine which had contributed to a calmer, more child centred experience. Children were confident in the rolling lunch routine. While the overall environment was positive, there were occasions when staff became task focused, resulting in missed opportunities for deeper, connected interactions that could have further enriched the nurturing qualities of the experience. Meals were nutritious, culturally appropriate and reflected the 'Setting the Table' guidance. Water was available throughout the day to ensure children remained hydrated.

The team recognised the importance of transitions and the impact this may have on children and their families. We found child centred transitions were thoughtfully planned and responsive to the evolving needs of children and families. Transitions throughout the session were handled with sensitivity, supporting children to feel safe and secure as they moved between activities and spaces. Staff communicated clearly about what was happening next, helping children develop predictability and confidence. Within the PSADU routines were clearly communicated through the use of visual aids helping children understand what would happen next and feel secure. Familiar adults offered reassurance when needed, promoting children's emotional wellbeing. Staff used nurturing, consistent interactions that promoted trust, comfort, and confidence. One parent told us, "All of the staff are wonderful, they're so friendly and so invested in the children's wellbeing and learning and development".

Staff knew children and families well, and this supported personalised approaches to meeting children's health, wellbeing and learning needs. Some personal plans reflected children's preferences and care needs. We highlighted personal plans would benefit from being streamlined with clearer strategies showing how staff would support all children's care, play and learning. This would aligned personal plans with key documents such "Guide for Providers on Personal Planning Early Learning and Childcare."

Children with additional needs had comprehensive children's wellbeing plans, and staff welcomed multi agency collaboration. The team worked effectively with a range of other professionals and feeder nurseries to support continuity of care and learning. These collaborative approaches ensured that all parties, including families, had a shared understanding of children's needs. This strengthened transitions across settings and ensured holistic, well coordinated support for children's learning journeys. Within the PDASU, we identified more detailed information relating to children's preferences, health and care needs would strengthen the quality of plans and ensure adherence to best practice guidance.

Strong and trusting partnerships with families enriched the quality of children's experiences. Families described positive relationships with staff and felt welcomed and valued within the setting. Effective two way communication was maintained through informal discussions, coffee mornings, and online learning updates. Parents engaged in 'Did You Know?' events, which showcased children's learning and highlighted experiences such as woodland adventures and local community work. Parents were invited to participate in woodland sessions, strengthening relationships and enhancing a shared understanding of children's learning. This meaningful involvement contributed to shared understanding and strengthened outcomes for children. One parent told us "The nursery has days you can go in and see how and what they do on a daily basis. We can go with them on outdoor fun to the woods." Another parent told us, "They hold regular stay and play sessions that allow us to see the play, learning and care."

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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