

# Machanhill Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

c/o Machanhill Primary School  
Machanhill  
Larkhall  
ML9 2HG

Telephone: 01698 882 101

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
21 January 2026

**Service provided by:**  
South Lanarkshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003481

**Service no:**  
CS2003046526

## About the service

Machanhill Primary School Nursery Class is a daycare of children service registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 50 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. Children attend full day sessions and at the time of the inspection there were 42 children present.

Children are cared for in the dedicated playroom with access to toilets and had direct access to an enclosed garden. Additional outdoor spaces were situated within Machanhill Primary School. The service is located in the Lanark area of South Lanarkshire close to main roads, public transport links, and local shops, accessible for families.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday, 20 January 2026 from 09:30 until 16:40 hours and Wednesday, 21 January 2026 from 09:15 until 16:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was also present as part of the Care Inspectorate's quality assurance processes. 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
- spoke with staff and management
- spoke with one visiting professional
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- reviewed online feedback from 22 parents and eight staff.

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.

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;

## Key messages

- Risk assessments were in place to help ensure children were kept safe.
- Children were actively engaged in a wide range of experiences, including role play, construction, technology and outdoor learning.
- Outdoor spaces were well-resourced and inviting, offering messy play, physical challenges and creative experiences. This meant children were engaged in play which supported their learning.
- Children had developed relationships with both their peers and staff, helping them to feel settled.
- Improvements were needed to lunchtime to help ensure children experience a relaxed and enjoyable mealtime.
- Reviewing the pace of the day and the quality of language used by staff will help ensure children experience consistency and support for their wellbeing.

## 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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

## Leadership 4 - Good

### 'Quality Indicator 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.

A revised vision, values and aims had been established that reflected input from families. This supported parents to feel valued and helped create a vision unique to the setting. Parents told us, "It's a safe environment. I feel happy going to work and leaving my [child] in their care" and "they all take time to know my child and engage, which makes me feel happy sending [them] each day."

Leaders had an existing improvement plan focusing on enhancing the learning environment, including increasing the availability of toys and materials that could support children's learning and development. Staff had visited other nurseries to engage in professional dialogue and share practice. In addition, the service had been reviewing guidance such as 'Space to Grow and Thrive' to support them in making improvements. These visits and the use of national guidance contributed to positive outcomes for children by helping staff reflect on their practice and implement changes that enhance the quality of the learning environment.

We discussed with management improvements needed to the pace of the day and some interactions to help support children's wellbeing. Management shared it had been sometime since staff reviewed child development and provided assurances they would provide appropriate training. We further discuss this under Quality Indicator 'Nurturing care and support'.

A well planned quality assurance calendar outlined monitoring activities and review points with clear timescales, including regular checks of personal plans, learning journals and observations. Monthly staff meetings supported reflective practice and ongoing development.

New staff were supported to become familiar with their role through an induction process that included guidance from a mentor. We discussed where this approach could be further strengthened and signposted the manager to the 'Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource'. For example, recording meetings and agreed action points would help ensure that staff feel valued and supported, while also providing a clear way to track their progress over time.

Staff appraisals were carried out yearly to support staff in their role, to build on strengths and offer support where needed. We discussed where some small changes could be made to these to ensure actions are recorded and carried out. This could help ensure staff feel valued within their role.

Staff had completed a variety of training opportunities to help support their knowledge and practice. For example, understanding distressed behaviour, child protection training, bookbug and creativity for children. To strengthen this further, the service should evaluate and record how training is impacting outcomes for children. This could help support staff reflect on learning and improve practice where needed.

**Children play and learn** 4 - Good**'Quality Indicator 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 engaged in a wide range of learning experiences that encouraged exploration, problem solving, and enjoyment. Opportunities such as using safety knives to chop vegetables, painting, construction, technology, and woodwork with real tools supported choice and reflected their interests. For example, children laughed with delight as dominoes toppled through brick structures, demonstrating curiosity and joy in their play.

Staff supported children during free flow play and they responded well to their involvement, helping them to feel valued and have their ideas recognised. For example, they showed focus and hand eye coordination as they hammered nails at the woodwork bench and followed sequences and patterns during hopscotch. These experiences enabled children to become immersed in their play. Children were more engaged in these experiences than in more structured parts of the day. We discussed this under nurture care and support, recorded later in report.

Improvements to the outdoor garden had created an inviting and well resourced area that children accessed freely, supporting choice and independence. Outdoors offered opportunities for messy play, physical movement and child led learning. Children engaged in water play, pouring and filling containers and problem solving when they discovered holes in the bottoms. They led their own play, from washing the pirate ship to using the water hose, with their laughter drawing others to join. We discussed how staff could further extend these experiences through effective questioning to deepen children's learning and engagement.

Children had access to an additional outdoor area at the bottom of the garden within the school grounds. This space included tyre swings, large scale construction materials, a fire pit, mud kitchen and opportunities for planting and growing. Children proudly shared that they had grown potatoes and carrots and used these to make food. In addition, access to a polytunnel further supported planting and growing activities. These experiences promoted real life skills and helped children develop an understanding of where food comes from.

Children's literacy and numeracy development had been evident through a wide range of experiences across the nursery. This included stories, songs, technology, mark making, building activities, and games such as hopscotch. For example, during action songs, children and staff shared laughter and enjoyment as they sang about a worker's truck while wearing hard hats and hi vis vests.

Planning for learning was informed by children's thoughts, ideas and interests, promoting a child led approach. Floor books captured children's voices and participation, providing opportunities for reflection. We signposted the manager to the 'Children's Rights Skills and Knowledge Framework' to support their ongoing development of children's rights based practice.

## Children are supported to achieve 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

### 'Quality Indicator Nurturing care and support'.

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Children were settled, happy and comfortable within the setting. They had formed positive relationships with staff and their peers. Many children were confident when engaging with inspectors, readily starting conversations, asking questions and involving us in their play, such as offering play money or guiding us to areas of interest. This told us children were secure in their environment and were developing strong social and communication skills.

The service had established strong relationships with families. Parents appreciated that staff knew their children well and felt reassured by the level of care provided. Effective induction processes, including settling in periods, daily updates and online learning journals, supported ongoing communication. Parents told us, "my child's key worker always updates me when I collect my child daily" and "they engage very positively with the children in their care and build wonderful relationships".

We found transitions throughout the day impacted the consistency and quality of staff interactions. During times such as group time, lunch and tidy up, staff use of tone and language varied and raised voices due to environmental noise, including tidy up music played increased noise levels in playroom. These factors reduced the quality of engagement and connection with children during key moments of the day. In addition, at times, unnecessary rules had the potential to impact on children's self-esteem and confidence. We discussed this with management who agreed to address. (see area for improvement 1).

Children enjoyed a relaxing and calm snack experience. They served their own food, supporting them to make choices that supported their preferences and independence. We discussed the importance of cutting fruit into smaller pieces to support safe eating and to ensure food was presented in a way that children could easily manage. We had also discussed afternoon snack provision to ensure that all children had sufficient access to food throughout the day if required, to support their nutritional needs and energy levels and the importance of sharing clear information with parents about snack routines. One parent told us, "I am not sure of the snack routines and whether this is sit down or optional. I don't think my child would choose to stop playing to go and eat".

At lunchtime, children had the opportunity to take on the role of lunch monitors, which included helping to set up the lunch hall. This supported their involvement in the lunch process. However, staff were task focused at lunch time and children were not given opportunities to serve their own food. Some children had struggled to manage the lunch trays. We discussed the importance of creating a more relaxed and enjoyable lunchtime experience for both children and staff to promote a nurturing approach. Management shared they had recognised improvements were needed to lunchtime and we signposted them to guidance to support them making changes.

Personal plans for children had outlined their interests, likes and dislikes. These contained important information about the support needed to meet children's needs. This included close working with external agencies. Feedback from partner agencies had been positive, particularly in relation to the quality of communication with staff and the sharing of strategies to support children's needs.

Systems had been in place to help keep children safe. This included robust arrangements for the management of medication, with lifesaving medication being taken with the child to all areas of the setting, including outdoors and the lunchroom. Staff had been mindful in carrying out regular headcounts and door alarms were used to help ensure children did not leave playrooms unattended. Procedures for staying connected to other staff when in the bottom garden needed reviewed to ensure safeguarding. We shared best practice and the manager agreed to review.

### Areas for improvement

1. To promote children's wellbeing, the provider should review and improve staff interactions to ensure these are consistent and supportive. This should include, but not limited to, reviewing pace of the day and the use of unnecessary rules.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people's attention (HSCS 3.1)' and 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes (HSCS 3.14)'.

### 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

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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