

Mearns Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Hunter Drive
Newton Mearns
Glasgow
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Telephone: 01415 707 220

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 February 2026

Service provided by:
East Renfrewshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003372

Service no:
CS2003017009

About the service

Mearns Primary School Nursery is provided by East Renfrewshire Council. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children aged three and above at any one time. The age range of the children will be three years to not yet attending primary school. Minimum staffing levels to comply with schedule of staffing 5/7/2004, which must be displayed together with the certificate.

The service operates within designated areas within the primary school, and children had access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 3 February and Wednesday 4 February 2026. This inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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/spent time with 48 people using the service
- received 8 completed questionnaires
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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.

During this inspection we 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

- Children experienced high quality, nurturing care and had strong relationships with staff.
- Play and learning experiences were rich, varied, and well supported by staff.
- Leadership was strong, with a shared vision and positive engagement with families and the wider community.
- Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to parental involvement and understood that a collaborative approach enhanced children's development and learning.
- Staff deployment over lunchtime would benefit from being monitored to ensure continued positive engagement.
- Continue to develop and monitor the quality of planning, floor books, and snapshot book evidence.

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	5 - Very 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 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.

Since the last inspection, the staff and management team had worked hard to develop a service that delivered best outcomes for children, families, partners and the wider community. Management, staff and families have collaboratively reviewed and reflected on the nursery and school vision, values and aims. This process ensured that the voice and aspirations of children, families and the wider staff team were represented. The shared vision focused on learning, growing and succeeding together through high quality experiences in a bright, stimulating environment and providing an inclusive, nurturing environment for everyone in the school community. As a result, this was supporting the staff team to provide clear direction with a focus on best outcomes for all within the school and nursery community. Parents told us: 'Staff are caring and safe and friendly environment', 'Great nursery teachers and facilities for the kids.', 'My child loves going to this service.'

The service had recognised the importance of parental and community involvement and had actively sought parents' views through daily informal interactions, newsletters, questionnaires and the open-door ethos. Family learning events, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities and "languages around the world," including Spanish and Spanish dancing, had supported family engagement and enriched children's learning experiences. Parents' contributions were respected and valued, and the service routinely shared feedback with families to demonstrate that parental voice influenced developments.

The management team had developed quality assurance processes to support ongoing improvement. Through discussions with the principal teacher and lead practitioner, a clear vision for improvement was evident. Priorities such as increasing children's responsibility for leading their own learning, continuing to embed pupil profiling to strengthen pupil voice, and supporting children to reflect on their progress and identify next steps were appropriate and aligned with improving learning outcomes. The team had also begun to implement the shared quality framework 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors 2025' to guide and support continued improvements.

During the inspection, we saw that improvements had begun to take shape. For example, the environment was attractive, engaging and supporting children to play and learn, areas were organised and children were engaging in positive learning experiences alongside staff. A quality assurance calendar was in place to guide management activity across the year, and regular audits had supported reflective practice and informed ongoing developments.

The service would benefit from continuing to implement and develop the formal and systematic process for monitoring staff practice, engagement and delivery of learning experiences. This will help ensure staff accountability, identify where support or training is required, and further strengthen the team's collective ability to deliver high quality outcomes for children and families.

There was a good mix of skills and qualifications across the team. All staff had been safely recruited and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). New staff had been well supported through

mentoring and the use of national induction resources. This ensured they had clear roles and responsibilities and were able to contribute effectively to high quality care and learning from the outset.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Play learning and developing

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.

Throughout the inspection, children were observed to be very happy, confident and fully engaged in their play. They played cooperatively with their peers, which demonstrated their ability to lead their own play and learning, and showed strong social skills as they formed friendships or worked in small groups. Staff interactions had a positive impact on outcomes. They offered praise and encouragement, played alongside children when appropriate and stepped back when children benefited from leading their own play.

Staff responded sensitively to children's cues using a range of approaches, including board maker visuals, objects of reference and Hanen strategies which focuses on supporting staff to enhance children's communication skills. The strategies emphasize the importance of natural interactions in a child's daily life, making language and learning a fun and engaging process. As a result, children demonstrated increasing responsibility, independence and confidence in their play.

Children benefited from a broad range of high-quality experiences and resources that supported their curiosity, creativity, sensory exploration and imaginative play. Staff provided a balanced mix of child led and adult led experiences that promoted early language, literacy and numeracy. Interest tables with natural and open-ended materials, messy play with shaving foam, block play, arts and crafts, water play and mark making opportunities all contributed to children developing their own ideas, skills and stories. Children had access to a wide variety of storybooks, and staff frequently read with them, using props to strengthen language development, boost imagination and deepen engagement. Parents told us: 'Great knowledgeable staff, lots of fun activities and facilities.', 'wide range of activities and experiences on offer.', 'My child is made to feel safe and valued in a collaborative setting.'

Outdoor play formed a key part of children's daily experiences and made a significant contribution to their physical, social and cognitive development. Staff planned outdoor areas to promote imagination, physical skills, literacy and numeracy. For example, staff supported children to explore initial letter sounds by searching for objects beginning with those letters. Children also demonstrated responsibility through activities such as litter picking, and they engaged in exploratory play through filling, pouring and mixing in the water area. Staff provided appropriate supervision and encouragement, enabling children to safely challenge themselves, develop problem solving skills and work collaboratively.

Children moved independently between indoor and outdoor spaces, putting on and taking off their all-weather suits and boots with minimal support. This autonomy supported physical wellbeing, confidence and decision making. We discussed continuing to develop the outdoor environment, ensuring that resources taken outdoors served a clear purpose and enhanced learning.

A planning system was in place, and staff explained that this remained a working progress. At the time of inspection, the approach was at an early stage in demonstrating progression, depth and tracking of children's learning. We encouraged staff to continue developing responsive planning that clearly reflects individual children's interests and identified next steps.

Snapshot books were being used to document children's progress in play, learning and development. While some staff were more confident than others in recording progress, we found very good evidence across snapshot books, area planners, floor books and the literacy and numeracy tracking tool. These systems now need to be streamlined to ensure clear, consistent and manageable approaches to recording learning.

The service shared plans to strengthen monitoring of snapshot books, planning processes and floor books. We would encourage staff and management to continue developing their approaches to observing play, making effective assessments, creating purposeful provocations and documenting progress and achievements. Strengthening these processes will support the service to demonstrate breadth, progression and depth of learning more clearly and ensure children's individual learning journeys are well planned and meaningfully recorded.

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 experienced consistently warm and nurturing interactions from all staff. Staff were caring, kind and demonstrated a strong understanding of individual children's needs. Children had developed trusting relationships with staff and confidently sought comfort, reassurance and involvement in their play. This showed that children felt secure, emotionally safe and settled within the environment. Parents told us: 'My child loves going which is a testament to the staff and the nursery environment and ethos.' , 'Warm and welcoming friendly staff who know all the children.'

Staff knew children and their families well. They were able to describe children's individual likes, dislikes and interests, and held meaningful conversations with children about their home lives and extended families. As a result, children were confident, happy and engaged, with a strong sense of belonging.

Children's privacy and dignity was respected during personal care routines. Staff supported children sensitively and encouraged them to be as independent as possible. Staff had begun to create spaces that enabled children to socialise, play independently or engage with others. Some areas had been developed to help children regulate their emotions and support the development of social skills. Staff and management should continue to enhance these spaces to further support children's emotional wellbeing.

Children's wellbeing was supported through tailored personal plans linked to best practice guidance and the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) framework. Wellbeing indicators were used to gather key information about each child's needs, supporting their health, safety and learning. Staff regularly identified and tracked children's next steps and met with parents to discuss progress and achievements. Parents told us they found these meetings informative and supportive. To strengthen clarity, we encouraged the service to streamline information and make current targets more visible, for example through a one-page child profile summarising key information, strategies and current needs.

Staff and senior management knew their families very well and had created a warm, welcoming and supportive environment. They valued parents' contributions, recognising that family knowledge was essential in meeting children's needs. This helped staff plan experiences and environments that were inclusive and accessible for all children.

Families were encouraged to be active participants in their children's play and learning through initiatives such as book bug sessions, nature nurture, bilingual blethers, parental engagement groups and outreach support. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to parental involvement and understood that a collaborative approach enhanced children's development and learning.

Staff knew all children and families well and took effective account of their individual needs. They understood the cultural, socio economic and linguistic context of children's lives and ensured experiences were inclusive and reflective of this. Children were able to participate in celebrations such as Eid, Ramadan and Christmas. Staff worked effectively with a range of partners and signposted families to local support services where needed. Staff and management were committed to getting it right for every child, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for all families.

Medication sampled during the inspection was stored appropriately and in line with best practice guidance 'Management of Medication in Daycare of Children and Childminding Services.'

Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried and sociable. Children's dietary needs, allergies and intolerances were fully catered for, and meals were nutritious and varied. Children were encouraged to be independent by self-serving food and drinks. Staff promoted language and conversation through talking prompts. For example, children were engaged in a rich conversation about different types of farm animals, discussing the difference between a sheep and a goat. We would encourage staff to consider opportunities to eat or drink alongside children to model social behaviours and continuing to develop the inclusive atmosphere. Management and staff would benefit from monitoring staff deployment during lunch, as at times some children were left wandering without engagement.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 30 May 2025, the provider must ensure children are safeguarded and protected from harm. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Ensure an audit of safeguarding procedures are conducted within the service.
- b) Ensure the manager and staff are knowledgeable and understand the reporting, responding, and recording of child protection concerns.
- c) Ensure the manager implements a robust recording system that is clear and concise to follow, track and understand when reporting, responding, and recording child protection concerns.
- d) Ensure policies, procedures and guidance is updated and in line with current guidance and legislation.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users); Regulation 7(2)(c) (Fitness of managers); and Regulation 9(2)(b) (Fitness of employees) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying, and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20); and 'If I might harm myself or others, I know that people have a duty to protect me and others, which may involve contacting relevant agencies'. (HSCS 3.25).

This requirement was made on 19 March 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

Child protection policy is in place and updated, this reflects national and local guidance and service use local authority policy to guide them. A flow chart has been implemented to support staff and management to follow clear steps. In the flow chart it states that the child protection co-ordinator should gather all information following a disclosure. This may include contacting request for assistance. Visitor badges give names of child protection coordinator and how to report any concerns. Staff have all had up to date training and are confident how to report and record any concerns. This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

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

The manager and staff should streamline information gathered to ensure personal plans are sufficiently detailed and consistent across the service. This should include but not be limited to identifying 'how' staff will support and enhance children's health, wellbeing and safety or foster their play, learning and next steps with focused targets and strategies that are clear and concise for all staff to follow.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 19 March 2025.

Action taken since then

Personal plans have been updated and now hold better information to help staff support children's health, welfare and safety needs or foster their play and learning and next steps. We discussed implementing a one-page profile to support identifying the key areas of literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing as well as current strategies being used or implemented. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To keep children safe and healthy, management should review and update recording templates and policies and procedures to ensure all information is in line with best guidance 'Management of medication in day care of children and childminding services'.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective'. (HSCS 1.24)

This area for improvement was made on 19 March 2025.

Action taken since then

We sampled medication held along with the service's policy and procedures and found they are in line with best practice guidance 'Management of medication in day care of children and childminding services.' This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children experience high quality facilities, that support children to play and rest in an environment that is well maintained and supports rigorous infection prevention and control. The provider and manager should consider attention to the following areas:

Repairing sink areas and flooring that have exposed porous surfaces.

Review the children's toilet door to support children's privacy and dignity and good infection prevention and control.

Clear cluttered surfaces within the playroom and kitchen area and implement a risk assessment and guidance, for the use of the washing machine.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well- maintained premises, furnishings and equipment'. (HSCS 5.22)

This area for improvement was made on 19 March 2025.

Action taken since then

The service has actioned required repairs as detailed. We did note the sink in the playroom could be re sealed which they advised would be actioned. Children's toilets have been upgraded to support privacy and dignity and good infection prevention and control. Playrooms and kitchen are tidy, and surfaces are clear of clutter. 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.

Detailed evaluations

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

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