

Riverside Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

16 Forrest Road
Stirling
FK8 1UJ

Telephone: 01786 237933

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 March 2026

Service provided by:
Stirling Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002689

Service no:
CS2003015610

About the service

Riverside Nursery is a registered daycare of children service. This is a local authority service who are registered to provide care to a maximum of 32 children at one time, age from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is part of Riverside Primary School and consists of a playroom, outdoor play space and toilet facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 March 2026 between 08:30 and 16:30. We continued the inspection on 11 March 2026, between 08:30 and 11:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 11 March 2026. The 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, complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received 10 completed questionnaires from families and 10 from staff
- spoke to staff members 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, physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

During the 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 received warm, caring and nurturing interactions that helped them feel safe and secure.
- Leaders and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to a shared vision that reflected high standards for children and families.
- Staff were committed to and worked well together to improve outcomes for children.
- Children were happy, engaged in their learning and having fun.
- Children's play and learning was enhanced through access to spaces in the local community.

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.

The service's vision, values and aims were embedded in practice and this consistently promoted high standards for children. Management and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to delivering high quality care across all aspects of their work. This meant, children benefitted from a culture of high expectations that supported their wellbeing, learning and overall experiences.

Self-evaluation systems were in place, and these required further development to ensure all children's views were fully considered. For example, the 'Question of the Month' could have involved children to gather feedback. Staff reflected well together, including when planning garden improvements. This helped bring about positive changes for children.

A quality assurance calendar was in place identifying key tasks across the year. Robust, timely monitoring and audits supported reflective practice, identified areas for development and led to informed improvements. To strengthen this further, we encouraged the service to build on existing systems to ensure ongoing sustained improvement.

The pace of change was well considered and took account of the views of staff, children and families. Management had identified ways to improve the lunchtime experience, which helped ensure a consistent approach to supporting care, play and learning for children over lunchtime.

Staff were empowered through their leadership roles, enabling them to implement change effectively and share their learning within and beyond the service. Their passion in achieving both the STEM Nation Award and Digital Awards demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Staff felt valued within the team, and this was reflected in feedback and 'shout outs' that they gave to each other. Staff commented, "All staff contribute views and observations through regular meetings, audits, questionnaires and reflective discussions. I am asked for feedback on what is working well and identify areas for improvement as a team". As a result, the service benefitted from a motivated workforce whose shared leadership and reflective practice promoted positive outcomes for children.

Effective induction and mentoring processes had supported staff to settle within the service and feel confident in their role. Staff completed training that linked to children's needs, improvement priorities and the service context. We highlighted that staff could further reflect on their training, to identify the impact on their practice and the impact on improved outcomes for children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, 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.

Children were engaged in their play and learning, supported by a skilled staff team. Learning spaces were carefully designed and open-ended resources promoted curiosity, creativity and high-quality experiences.

Children made informed choices about where to play both indoors and outdoors, which strengthened their independence and engagement. One child shared that they like playing outdoors and playing rugby. Interruptions to free flow play were observed prior to lunchtime and the service is being responsive to this to support children's experiences.

Staff were down at children's level, making eye contact, giving praise and using children's names within their play. Staff further supported children in their play and learning through commenting, questioning and giving children time to respond. This helped deepen children's thinking, communication and engagement.

Staff worked effectively with families by introducing home learning bags. This provided appropriate support and challenge tailored to individual children's needs. This approach strengthened children's progress by extending learning between home and nursery, promoting their learning and development.

Planning approaches had recently been reviewed to ensure children's interests were at the centre of decision making. Although this work was at an early stage, we encouraged the service to continue with their plans.

Observations of learning were shared with families through an online platform. Effective tracking and monitoring systems enabled staff to identify children's learning and plan targeted support and challenge, such as the Physical and Gaelic groups. Data gathered through these systems demonstrated the positive impact of this approach on children's learning and engagement.

Online journals were used to track children's progress over time. Staff identified learning possibilities for individual children and linked observations. We highlighted that next steps could be included more consistently, alongside children's voices. This would enhance progression over time and deepen children's ownership of their learning.

Children's play, learning and development was enriched through connections to the local community. Children access the local shops, library and woodlands area. This supported children to connect with the wider world and feel a sense of belonging.

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 warm, nurturing and caring interactions that helped them feel safe and secure. One parent shared, "I am very happy with the care given, staff team are fantastic". As a result, they were settled and confident as they moved freely within the playroom spaces.

Transitions across services were thoughtfully considered, helping to minimise disruptions to their routines. Staff described positive partnership working with the school community, with older children supporting

younger children in their learning experiences. As a result, children benefitted from consistent, nurturing support that strengthened their sense of continuity across settings.

Children experienced relaxed, unhurried mealtimes where they were supported to develop independence through opportunities for self-serving. Staff positioned themselves at tables to engage with children and provide support when needed. As a result, children benefitted from a calm, nurturing dining experience that supported their communication skills and overall wellbeing.

Personal Plans were in place for each child and identified their needs, strengths and interests. These were reviewed by families in line with current legislation, ensuring information remained current and relevant to meeting children's needs. Chronologies had recently been introduced to record significant events. This ensured staff had access to accurate, up-to-date information that supported children's wellbeing and care needs. One parent shared, "I am fully involved in my child's care and feel listened to and valued. I am included in developing and reviewing my child's personal plan, and staff work closely with me to meet my child's needs".

The service had suitable procedures in place to make sure medication was given safely. We discussed some areas where the medication information could be improved, and the service agreed to make these changes. This meant children were kept safe, and the planned improvements would make the records even clearer and more reliable.

Relationships with families were strong, respectful and meaningful. Staff valued their connections with families and strived to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment. Parents had opportunities to take part in flexible and structured stay and play sessions, allowing them to be involved in their child's learning and development. One parent commented, "Opportunities for families to leave improvement suggestions and attend stay and play sessions to feel involved and part of the nursery community". As a result, families felt included, listened to and involved in their children's experiences, we would encourage the service to continue to build on these opportunities.

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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