

Belmont House School Nursery Day Care of Children

Sandringham Avenue
Newton Mearns
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Telephone: 01416 392 922

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
18 March 2026

Service provided by:
Belmont House School Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003003579

Service no:
CS2003017001

About the service

Belmont House School Nursery is part of Belmont House School which is an independent, co-educational whole through school from 3 years to 18 years. The service is based within the school campus and provides early learning and childcare to a maximum of 32 children from three years to not yet attending primary.

The provider is Belmont House School Limited, the nursery worked in partnership with East Renfrewshire Council.

Children had access to a large playroom along with various outdoor play spaces around the school grounds, as well as a dedicated garden space.

The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 and 18 March 2026, between the hours of 08:45 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. There were 19 children registered at the time of inspection.

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 six families through online questionnaires.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.
- 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 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 also 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; and
- Children's engagement with the experiences provided in their service.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Warm, trusting relationships are a strong feature of the setting. Staff are responsive, intuitive, and attuned to individual children, helping them feel valued, safe, and understood.
- Staff engage meaningfully in self evaluation and use national guidance to reflect on and strengthen practice.
- Improvements to the environment and routines demonstrate strong capacity for change and a shared drive to enhance outcomes for children.
- Planning approaches are developing well, with growing confidence in responsive and intentional planning.
- Wellbeing indicators underpin planning and daily practice, leading to consistent, nurturing approaches that support all aspects of children's development.
- Feedback from families is actively sought, listened to, and used to inform improvements, contributing to a strong sense of partnership and shared responsibility.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very 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 5 - Very Good

QIs inspected: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

The service demonstrated a clear and purposeful vision underpinned by values of respect, engagement, happiness, and wellbeing. These principles were consistently evident in daily practice, with staff maintaining a strong and sustained commitment to upholding children's rights. Children were routinely involved in decisions about routines and activities, with staff using child friendly language, to support choice making and encouraging children to express their preferences confidently. Interactions were warm, respectful, and attentive, contributing to a positive culture where children's views were valued and their rights actively promoted.

Leaders and staff showed a high level of commitment to continuous improvement, engaging meaningfully in ongoing self evaluation. Staff used the 'Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare' to guide monthly reflective reviews, structured around challenge questions and prompts that encouraged them to consider current practice and evaluate its impact. This approach enabled staff to deepen professional understanding, recognise strengths, and identify clear and purposeful next steps. This ensured that improvements remained focused on children's needs and rights.

Management demonstrated effective oversight and strategic planning through an improvement plan that was meaningful, realistic in pace, and clearly linked to national priorities and previous inspection findings. The plan functioned as an active working document, supporting sustained progress and providing clarity around roles and responsibilities. This meant that improvements directly enhanced children's experiences, leading to a more responsive, well organised, and higher quality environment where children benefitted from thoughtful, purposeful developments aligned with national guidance.

Systems for measuring and monitoring outcomes were generally strong, particularly in relation to medication and child protection. Medication was stored safely and staff displayed good knowledge of children's medical needs. Leaders had implemented termly audits and updated recording templates; however, some improvements were identified to align the medication policy with current best practice. These included clearer processes for risk assessment, the introduction of a medication error documentation, guidance on safe disposal, and ensuring all medication was appropriately labelled and accompanied by relevant information. Leaders demonstrated strong capacity for improvement by implementing several of these refinements during the inspection.

Procedures relating to allergies and risk assessments were established and regularly reviewed. Opportunities to strengthen the clarity and accessibility of allergy information were identified, along with the need for more detailed guidance within emergency medication risk assessments. Risk assessments across the setting were comprehensive and included daily checks; improvements relating to loose parts and the use of more nurturing language in behaviour related documents were promptly addressed during the inspection.

Leaders created conditions where staff felt informed, trusted, and involved in improvement processes. Distributed leadership was evident, with staff contributing meaningfully to reflective discussions and taking responsibility for actions within the improvement plan. A comprehensive quality assurance calendar supported robust monitoring through environmental audits, 'Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale' (ECERS) evaluations, peer reviews, and management led monthly reports. These systems ensured a consistent focus on maintaining high quality environments and practice.

Recruitment and induction procedures were well structured, supporting a stable and confident staff team. Leaders promoted a positive workplace culture where staff felt valued and encouraged to develop professionally. Ongoing training, regular one to one meetings, and targeted professional development opportunities enhanced staff knowledge and strengthened practice across the setting.

As a result of effective leadership, the service operated with clarity, consistency, and a shared sense of purpose. Reflective practice and collaborative improvement approaches ensured that staff were continually developing their skills and applying learning directly to enhance children's daily experiences. The commitment to maintaining high quality provision meant that changes were meaningful, sustained, and focused on what mattered most, improving outcomes for children and families. This positive culture supported a well organised, nurturing, and responsive environment where children benefitted from high quality interactions, carefully planned learning opportunities, and resources that met their needs.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces.

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 had appropriate arrangements in place to support the safety and security of children, including a secure door entry system with keypad access and a doorbell system to the playroom. This ensured children were kept safe.

Children were cared for in an environment which was welcoming, comfortable, and thoughtfully organised, providing a safe and secure space for children to play and learn. Lots of natural light and the use of neutral tones created a calm, warm and homely environment. Cosy spaces were available, such as large floor cushions and a sofa, which provided children with comfortable areas to rest and relax. Children had their own individual storage tray for personal items, which helped promote a sense of ownership and belonging within the setting.

Play spaces were well defined, supporting children's curiosity, creativity, and imagination. Areas included arts and crafts, sensory, imaginative play, construction and snack. The layout enabled children to move freely around and resources were displayed at child height, allowing children to make choices about their play.

Children had access to a dedicated, enclosed grassed garden area, providing a safe and well managed space that supported both active and appropriately challenging play. The outdoor environment offered a wide range of engaging experiences that promoted children's physical development, creativity, and curiosity. Children enjoyed activities such as painting, chalking, water play, and digging, and explored schematic play using resources like guttering for rolling balls and experimenting with water.

They also engaged in activities that promoted an understanding of their environment and community, including litter picking, bird watching and regular walks within the local area, such as visits to the nearby duck pond and involvement in the 'Keep Scotland Beautiful' campaign. These experiences fostered children's confidence, curiosity, and connection to their community.

Staff also provided clear guidance to help children understand and manage risks, for example when using knives during snack preparation or identifying hazards during water play. Children were encouraged to follow safety practices, including the use of wet floor signs. These approaches supported children in developing an age-appropriate understanding of safety and risk.

Risk assessments were in place for most areas and activities, including daily checks for playroom "zones", outdoor areas, and play experiences for example sand, water and playdough. Trips to the local and wider community were also considered. This ensured the safety of children within and beyond the setting.

Procedures were in place to ensure effective reporting of maintenance. Maintenance was supported by an onsite janitor, with clear systems for reporting and recording issues. These approaches supported a safe, hygienic, and well-maintained environment that promoted children's health and wellbeing.

The environment was well maintained, with systems in place to monitor safety and cleanliness. Staff had undertaken training and demonstrated good practice in infection prevention and control. Children were regularly reminded and supported to wash hands at appropriate times such as before and after eating, which encouraged them to develop healthy habits. We discussed that the service should review the layout and use of the nappy changing area to ensure these meet current infection prevention and control guidance. The manager agreed to review this.

The service was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, and children's information was stored appropriately. This supported the safe handling, storage, and protection of personal data in line with relevant requirements.

Next steps for the service include further developing opportunities for children to build their independence skills, for example during snack and lunch times, and gathering children's voices and views on the environment and resources to ensure children are fully involved in influencing change within the environment.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

QIs inspected: Playing, learning and developing.

Children experienced a well-considered learning environment in which they demonstrated good levels of engagement and ownership of their play. Across the setting, children were observed confidently exploring, laughing, chatting with peers, and immersing themselves deeply in activities of their choosing. Staff responded sensitively to children's cues, offering support at appropriate moments and interacting at their level to create a warm, inclusive, and enjoyable atmosphere. This resulted in children who felt secure, valued, and motivated to explore, problem solve, and develop early language and social skills through meaningful play.

Improvements to both the indoor and outdoor environments since the previous inspection had significantly enhanced the quality of experiences for children. Clearly defined play zones indoors supported purposeful engagement and provided opportunities for creativity, investigation, and imaginative play. Open ended and sensory materials such as sand, water, clay, and natural resources encouraged experimentation and contributed to early mathematical and scientific thinking. The home from home role play area successfully reflected children's lived experiences, promoting communication and imaginative development.

Cosy, quiet spaces were available throughout the environment, offering opportunities for rest and emotional regulation, and enabling children to return to play settled and ready to learn. Families recognised the quality of experiences on offer, with one parent commenting, "The learning experiences offered are superb".

Outdoor learning was a strong feature, with children benefitting from free flow access to a variety of play experiences that promoted physical development, creativity, and exploration of the natural world. Children balanced on tyres and wooden planks, created imaginary meals in the mud kitchen, explored materials from the discovery box, and engaged in large scale painting, using rollers. These experiences supported children to develop confidence, teamwork, and problem solving skills, while staff provided suitable levels of supervision and encouragement, to ensure children could challenge themselves safely and successfully.

The environment offered a range of engaging resources, but areas were not always reset or replenished throughout the day, which sometimes limited children's independence or engagement. To strengthen consistency, it would be beneficial to introduce clearer routines for resetting areas and replenishing resources throughout the day, ensuring all play spaces remain well organised, engaging, and supportive of continuous learning.

Literacy and numeracy were promoted through varied, developmentally appropriate approaches embedded naturally within play. Children engaged enthusiastically in songs and stories, including familiar Scottish rhymes, which supported language development and enjoyment. Mark making materials were available in meaningful contexts, enabling children to explore early writing confidently. Digital technologies, including educational games on the smart board and computer, were used to encourage early number recognition, counting, and problem solving, helping children build digital literacy alongside core skills.

Staff demonstrated a secure understanding of child development and adapted their practice sensitively to meet the needs of individual children. They modelled warm, calm communication, turn taking, negotiation, and problem solving during minor challenges, supporting emotional resilience and positive relationships. For children who required additional support, staff adjusted the pace and structure of activities effectively to maintain engagement. To continue strengthening outcomes, we discussed the importance of introducing further opportunities for appropriate challenge. This will help ensure that all children, including those who are more able or deeply engaged, experience rich learning that stretches their thinking, extends skills, and promotes deeper levels of curiosity and independence.

Planning approaches continued to develop well, with staff taking greater ownership of children's learning. Planning was increasingly responsive, based on children's emerging interests and observations. Floor books were used effectively to document learning, capture children's voices, and support children in revisiting prior experiences. Personalised learning journals aligned well with national guidance, and clear signposting between care plans, journals, and floor books demonstrated a shared and accurate understanding of each child's developmental progress. Staff monitored curriculum coverage to ensure breadth and depth, and as planning systems continue to evolve, a more defined planning cycle will support ongoing review and ensure progressively challenging, enriching experiences for all children.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

QIs inspected: Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced warm, nurturing, and responsive care that supported their emotional wellbeing and helped them feel secure within the setting. Staff had developed strong, trusting relationships with children and demonstrated a sensitive, attuned approach to meeting their individual needs. They consistently interacted at child's level, using calm and reassuring language that helped children feel understood and valued. Families expressed high levels of confidence in the staff team, sharing that they felt welcomed, supported, and reassured by the positive relationships and open communication. One parent reflected this strongly, commenting that staff were "welcoming, accommodating, friendly, approachable and so nurturing," which demonstrated the high level of trust and mutual respect established within the service.

Care routines were flexible and thoughtfully adapted to suit individual needs and preferences. Staff were attentive to personal care requirements and responsive to children's cues; however, we suggested that additional consideration be given to maintaining children's privacy and dignity during changing routines, particularly in the use of the changing table. Sleep, comfort, and rest needs were met in a calm and consistent manner, contributing to children's sense of safety and emotional regulation.

Mealtimes supported children's independence and confidence, with staff encouraging good hygiene routines and providing opportunities for children to self serve using real crockery and cutlery. A staff member was positioned at the serving table to support children sensitively as needed, ensuring assistance was provided promptly, such as when a child required help cutting food. Some meaningful interactions were observed during lunch; however, these were not always sustained due to staff moving between tasks. We suggested that serving meals from individual tables could further enhance the social and nurturing quality of mealtimes, allowing staff to remain seated with children for longer periods and support richer conversations. The service shared that they were already working towards this improvement.

Personal plans were detailed, well structured, and created in partnership with parents, providing a clear and holistic picture of each child. These included comprehensive 'All About Me' information outlining family circumstances, health needs, interests, preferences, communication styles, and strategies to support wellbeing. Staff used this information effectively to tailor care and learning, ensuring that children received personalised support that reflected their developmental stage and needs. Plans were reviewed termly, with updates recorded and next steps linked to 'Curriculum for Excellence'. Staff maintained strong systems of communication, including settling reports, parent meetings, and regular updates, ensuring families were fully involved.

An 'All About Me' passport complemented these plans by summarising key information about each child in an accessible format. These passports, updated termly, provided staff with up to date insights into children's needs, developmental progress, and any external factors influencing their wellbeing. This supported consistency across the team and informed inclusive practice.

Procedures for managing medication were suitable and ensured children's health needs were met safely. Staff demonstrated good understanding of individual medical requirements and had completed relevant training, supporting children's wellbeing and easing parental anxiety.

Relationships with families were strong, respectful, and meaningful. Parents were recognised as partners in their child's care, and the service demonstrated a commitment to cultural sensitivity, accessibility, and openness. Parents were encouraged to participate in the service through stay and play sessions, consultations, events, outings, and by sharing feedback. The service actively listened to families and made changes based on their views, demonstrated through displayed questionnaire results and improvements made in response to suggestions.

The setting worked effectively with external agencies to support holistic care for children. Staff engaged well with professionals such as speech and language therapists and accessed local early years intervention services to ensure the right support was in place. Wellbeing indicators were embedded in planning, with strategies shared across the team to ensure consistency. This coordinated approach helped children thrive and ensured their emotional, developmental, and health needs were met with care and sensitivity.

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 individualised and sufficiently detailed. This should include but not be limited to identifying next steps in learning 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 13 November 2024.

Action taken since then

The service has made significant progress in strengthening personal planning. Personal plans are now streamlined, individualised, and sufficiently detailed to support responsive, high-quality care. Staff have developed these plans in partnership with parents, ensuring they contain comprehensive 'All About Me' information, including family details, routines, interests, health needs, development, and communication preferences. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 2

To keep children safe and healthy, management should review storage of medication, implement a termly robust audit system and update recording templates 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 13 November 2024.

Action taken since then

We sampled medication held and found storage, recording templates and audits were in line with best practice guidance. **Therefore, this area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 3

To support positive outcomes and improve children's play experiences management and staff should:

- Provide children with more challenge, open ended materials and loose parts play, to discover, promote their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure.
- Review the layout of children's play spaces indoors and outdoors with a view to creating more space with better areas and opportunities for children to play and learn, choose resources, and be inspired and creative.

This is to ensure care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity'. (HSCS 2.27)

This area for improvement was made on 13 November 2024.

Action taken since then

The learning environment had been significantly enhanced since the last inspection, both indoors and outdoors, resulting in clearly defined play areas that supported deeper engagement and meaningful learning experiences.

The provision of open-ended materials now effectively encouraged children's creativity, investigation, and experimentation. Sensory resources, including sand, water, and clay, promoted early mathematical and scientific thinking, as well as the development of fine motor skills. **Therefore, this area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 4

To support children to achieve their full potential the manager and staff should review the current planning cycle to include high quality observations and next steps, with a focus on children's developmental stages. This will ensure that children are supported to lead their own play and learning that is tailored to their individual abilities and needs. This should include, but not be limited to, staff undertaking training to support them in planning, high quality observations, meaningful next steps and evidence of progression in learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me'. (HSCS 1.19)

This area for improvement was made on 13 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Following the last inspection the service has developed the planning, observations, and implementation of their understanding of child development and planning cycles. We recognise this is still developing, but we are confident through speaking with staff and management this will continue to support further outcomes for children. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 5

To improve better outcomes for children. Management should develop and implement robust quality assurance systems with a focus on, monitoring children's personal plans, children's experiences, monitoring of staff practice and evaluating and improving the nursery.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards that state; 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19)

This area for improvement was made on 13 March 2024.

Action taken since then

We sampled quality assurance processes that had been developed and implemented following the last inspection. We found management were monitoring and auditing safer recruitment, staff practice, quality of experiences, personal plans, medication and accident and incidents. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 6

Outcomes for children should be improved through supporting staff to implement a child-centred approach to observation, planning and assessment of children's learning through play. In addition, staff should be supported in developing their understanding of child development and planning cycles.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity". (HSCS 2.27)

This area for improvement was made on 13 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Child-centred planning and assessment were developing well, with strengths and identifiable areas for further improvement. Floor books captured children's reflections and prior learning, and staff monitored the breadth of the curriculum with consistency using a tracking system. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 7

As a matter of best practice the service should review their procedures for the safe storage and administration of medication.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 3 Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 17 November 2017.

This area for improvement was made on 13 November 2024.

Action taken since then

We sampled medication held and found storage, recording templates and audits were in line with best practice guidance. **Therefore, 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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	5 - Very 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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