Acorn Park Nursery
Day Care of Children

Beresford House
6 Claremont Terrace
Glasgow
G3 7XR

Telephone: 01413 322 461

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 June 2026

Service provided by:
Mary & Vari McDonald

Service provider number:
SP2003001245

Service no:
CS2003005834

About the service

Acorn Park Nursery is registered to provide a daycare service to a maximum of 126 children aged from birth to those not yet attending primary school as follows:

- 34 children aged 0 to 2 years accommodated on the lower ground floor.

- 42 children aged from 1 year to 3 years (of whom no more than 10 children are under 2 years) accommodated on the ground floor.

- 50 children aged from 2 to those not yet attending primary school (of whom no more than 10 children are under 3 years) to be accommodated on the first floor.

The children are cared for over three levels of a converted townhouse in the west end of Glasgow and have access to the private residents' gardens in addition to secure courtyards to the front and rear of the accommodation. The service also makes very good use of local amenities to support children's learning and development, including Kelvingrove Park, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and the Mitchell Library.

During our inspection, there were 91 children in attendance.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 and 10 June 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 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
- 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 that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Strong, reflective leadership supported a positive ethos, with staff fully involved in improvement and confident in their role in delivering high-quality care.
- Warm, nurturing relationships and good use of personal plans ensured children's individual needs were met.
- Children experienced engaging, child-led play supported by skilled staff interactions.
- Well-resourced, stimulating indoor and outdoor environments promoted curiosity, independence and creativity.
- A committed, skilled and well-supported staff team provided consistent, high-quality experiences.

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.

Leadership arrangements were well- established. The management team provided strong direction and had created a positive culture where staff felt valued, supported and motivated in their roles. Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined which helped ensure the smooth running of the service and supported ongoing improvement. This contributed to positive outcomes for children and families.

The management team had a clear understanding of the strengths of the service as well as areas for further development. They had used self-evaluation well to identify priorities and take action. Improvement planning was meaningful and linked closely to the vision and aims of the service. This ensured that changes made were relevant and had a positive impact on outcomes for children.

Staff were fully involved in the life and development of the service. They contributed to improvement planning through regular staff meetings, surveys and professional discussions. As a result, staff spoke confidently about the priorities of the setting and understood their role in taking these forward. This shared approach supported a strong sense of teamwork and collective responsibility.

The management team had supported staff well through clear guidance and regular communication. They provided tailored support to help staff meet the individual needs of children. This included offering bespoke advice and modelling good practice. As a result, staff felt confident in their roles and were able to provide consistent, high-quality care and learning experiences.

The staff team were professional, committed and enthusiastic. Many staff held qualifications above those required for their roles, which brought additional skills and knowledge into the setting. This contributed positively to children's experiences. Staff worked well together and there was a calm, respectful atmosphere across the service. Relationships between staff and children were warm and nurturing, this supported an ethos of rights respecting practice.

There were good opportunities for staff to engage in professional learning. Staff accessed a range of training and development activities to support their practice. The service had begun to explore how national induction resources could be used more effectively. There were plans to link these more closely to staff appraisals to better support individual development needs. Mentoring arrangements were in place, and staff were encouraged to continue their learning through coursework and further study.

Recruitment processes were robust and followed safer staffing guidance. Appropriate checks were carried out to ensure staff were suitable to work with children. The service benefited from a stable staff team, with high levels of retention. This provided consistency and continuity of care for children and families.

Staffing levels were very good, supporting appropriate ratios and allowing staff to respond to children's needs at a good pace. Staff reported that their wellbeing was well supported by the management team. This contributed to a positive working environment where staff felt respected and valued.

Resources were used effectively to support children's learning and development. The management team ensured that the service was well-organised and that staff were deployed in a way that met children's needs. Overall, strong leadership and effective management had created a well-run service with a clear focus on continuous improvement.

A high number of parents shared positive feedback about the service and how it provided a positive experience for their children. Comments included: "There always seem to be a large number of staff in the rooms in relation to the number of children. And in addition to this a large management team who I know support the rooms" and "We have known the staff for many years as our [other child] also attended the nursery."

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.

The service demonstrated a very good standard in supporting children's playing, learning and development. Children were observed to be actively engaged, highly motivated and enjoying their time within the setting. They were busy, inquisitive and fully involved in a wide range of experiences that supported their progress across all areas of learning.

The environment had been thoughtfully developed to provide a rich variety of opportunities for children to explore, create and use their imagination. Resources were accessible and well- matched to children's stages of development, allowing them to make independent choices and take ownership of their play. Improvements to the layout had supported a more open and flexible approach, enabling children to move freely between areas and follow their interests. This contributed to a calm and purposeful atmosphere where children could sustain their involvement for extended periods of time.

Staff interactions were of a high quality. Staff were attentive, responsive and demonstrated a strong understanding of children's individual needs and interests. They were skilled in knowing when to observe and when to sensitively intervene to extend children's thinking and learning. Through effective use of language, including modelling, commentary and open-ended questioning, staff supported children to develop their communication skills and deepen their understanding. Positive relationships were clear, and children were secure and confident in their interactions with staff.

Children led their own play and learning and were encouraged to explore their ideas and interests. They were observed engaging in imaginative and creative play, often collaborating with others and developing their own narratives. Staff recognised these opportunities and extended learning in meaningful ways, ensuring children remained at the centre of the learning process. There was a clear focus on promoting independence, curiosity and problem-solving skills for children.

Children benefited from regular access to outdoor learning experiences, including opportunities to explore natural environments. These experiences supported children's physical development, creativity and wellbeing. Children were observed to be confident and capable as they engaged in active and adventurous play. They took appropriate risks and developed resilience and perseverance. The use of natural materials encouraged imaginative play and supported children to make connections with the world around them.

The service had embedded positive approaches to support children's emotional wellbeing. Children were supported to understand and express their feelings, and this was reinforced through consistent strategies used by staff. There was evidence that this work extended beyond the setting, with families engaging in shared approaches to support children's emotional development. As a result, children were developing confidence, self-awareness and positive relationships with others.

Planning for play and learning was responsive and child-centred. Staff used observations, knowledge of children and input from families to identify next steps in learning. These were used to inform experiences that supported progression and development. The service had identified the need to strengthen how next steps were consistently recorded, tracked and reviewed over time. While systems were in place, further development in this area would enhance continuity and ensure all children's progress was clearly evidenced.

Parents shared positive comments including: "I think it is a wonderful place for the children who attend", "Active play in the nursery gardens", "Visiting local parks", "Exploring the local community - [child is] getting really good at road safety now."

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.

Across the setting, strong, warm and respectful relationships were shown between staff and children. Staff interactions were consistently caring, patient and responsive, ensuring that children felt safe, secure and valued. Children were observed to seek comfort, reassurance and engagement from staff, demonstrating the trusting relationships that had been established.

Staff knew children well and had a clear understanding of their individual needs, preferences and routines. This was supported through detailed personal planning, which was regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with families. As a result, care was responsive and tailored, supporting continuity between home and the setting. Staff used this knowledge well to ensure children experienced a sense of belonging and emotional security throughout their time in the service.

Children who required additional support were very well-supported. The service worked closely with families and external professionals to ensure appropriate strategies were in place to promote children's wellbeing and development. This collaborative approach ensured that children received consistent support and were able to participate fully in the life of the setting.

The service placed a strong emphasis on respecting children's rights and promoting their voice. Children were given choices and encouraged to express their preferences in daily routines and activities. Staff were observed seeking consent during personal care and offering support in a respectful manner, responding appropriately to children's cues and wishes. This approach supported children to develop confidence, independence and a sense of control. There was scope to further enhance this by making children's rights more visible within the environment and daily practice.

Communication was inclusive and well-supported. Staff used a range of approaches to meet children's individual communication needs, including visual supports, gestures and objects of reference. This ensured that all children were able to express themselves and be understood. As a result, children were confident communicators and engaged positively with others.

Supporting children's emotional wellbeing was a clear priority. Staff used recognised approaches and resources to help children identify, understand and regulate their emotions. These strategies were embedded into daily practice and were understood by children. There was also evidence of strong partnership working with families, with shared approaches used at home to support children's emotional development.

Transitions were managed thoughtfully and with care. Staff worked closely with families to support children moving into the service and throughout different stages of their journey. Approaches were personalised and, where appropriate, staff supported continuity by moving alongside children. This helped to reduce anxiety and support children to feel secure during change.

The service promoted a strong sense of community and belonging. Relationships with families were a key strength within the service. Families were welcomed into the setting and provided with opportunities to spend time, engage in play and connect with others. This created a nurturing, inclusive environment where children and families felt supported. Overall, the service provided high-quality nurturing care and support, resulting in positive outcomes for children.

Parents shared positive comments:

"We really appreciate the kindness and patience shown by the staff. Seeing our child happy and comfortable at nursery gives us reassurance and peace of mind. Thank you for all your hard work."

"The nursery is outstanding. I couldn't have found a better place for my child to have attended. [They] have been there since they were 2 years old and it has been wonderful. [They] love it as much as me and have been nurtured to become a confident, happy, inquisitive child. It is like our extended family."

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.scot

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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