The Orchard Nursery
Day Care of Children

29 Inverleith Row
Edinburgh
EH3 5QH

Telephone: 01315 525 000

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 September 2026

Service provided by:
The Orchard Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003002986

Service no:
CS2003012093

About the service

The Orchard Nursery provides a daycare of children service. They are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 63 children aged from birth to not yet attending primary school, with a maximum of 18 children aged from birth to under two years. The care service shall operate between the hours of 07:00 and 19:00, Monday to Friday.

The service is provided within a residential area which is situated within Edinburgh City. The service is close to parks, woodland walks and other local amenities. Children were cared for in dedicated play spaces over three floors within the property. There was an enclosed dedicated outdoor area for children to play and explore in. Rooms on the lower floor had free flow access to the outside space. Children had access to toilets and changing spaces close to their play rooms.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 22 September 2026 between 08:00 and 18:30. Feedback was shared with the service on Wednesday 23 September 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 and 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 17 completed questionnaires from families and staff
- 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 there were no improvements identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

• The service had a clear vision, values and aims that were understood and embedded in everyday practice.

• Children benefitted from warm, caring and nurturing approaches from staff that met their needs, rights and choices.

• Self-evaluation and quality assurance systems supported the management team with ensuring continuous improvement was prioritised.

• Children, families and staff were actively involved in shaping priorities and service improvements.

• Children were cared for by a staff team who knew them well and demonstrated a commitment to professional development.

• Children were cared for by a staff team who respected their rights and promoted them through activities and discussions.

• Children were able to explore their play ideas in engaging, welcoming and well-resourced learning environments.

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 settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The service demonstrated a strong and shared commitment to its vision, values and aims. These had been developed in consultation with families and children. They were embedded in daily practice as staff promoted an environment that was nurturing and inclusive. This contributed to a positive ethos where children and families felt listened to and part of the life of the nursery.

Self-evaluation and quality assurance systems were in place that helped children to thrive in an environment that valued continuous improvement. Clear priorities had been developed in consultation with families and staff. Feedback influenced areas for development, for example, exploring the community more. A parent told us, "more outdoor trips (this has increased recently)". Another parent shared, "they have acted on previous suggestions through the parent surveys and parents evenings". This meant that self-evaluation systems were effective in identifying areas for development to help improve children's experiences and that parents views were respected.

Children's voice and opinions were valued within the service. They were asked what they liked about their nursery and what they think could be better. For example, children used a system with smiley faces to show how they felt about different activities such as, the story and activity bags they brought home. Children had identified 'wishes' where we could see their opinions were taken seriously. When children asked for certain resources, these were purchased. Children felt listened to as their views and play ideas influenced positive outcomes.

Children benefitted from a staff team who understood the importance of professional development. Staff shared that they were able to take part in training together and with other services to help develop their practice through professional discussions. Evaluations of training took place. Staff mostly identified how particular training would support them in improving their practice and outcomes for children. Additional training had been identified for individual staff that linked to areas for development. For example, to introduce more outdoor learning experiences for children and Forest Kindergarten training was planned for staff. This meant that training opportunities were meaningful and helped to improve children's experiences.

Induction and support arrangements had been well structured and helped staff to reflect on practice and identify areas for professional development. These processes enhanced staff confidence in delivering high quality care.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children benefitted from very good experiences for play, learning and development. Staff knew children well and used this knowledge to adapt interactions and environments to ensure they were welcoming and engaging. A parent told us, "it is a good environment with plenty of options for play". Another parent shared, "well organised activities and there is a variety of resources in the room". This meant that an enabling environment had been created for children to thrive and achieve in a way that was right for them.

Children's communication and individual needs were respected through meaningful interactions from staff. Children were given time to respond to questions, staff were down at their level when speaking to them, including the younger children in the service. These approaches supported children to develop life skills in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways.

Planning for learning was increasingly responsive to children's interests and emerging preferences. Staff used observations and discussions with parents effectively to identify next steps in learning. This helped ensure individual experiences reflected children's strengths, needs and interests. Additional training had been planned to help staff become more confident in responsive planning and how to share children's learning within the service. These new approaches would allow children to take ownership and celebrate their learning.

Children had opportunities to explore the outdoors regularly. There was a well-resourced garden area where all children came together to play. A parent told us, "they are in the garden most days which my child loves". Another parent shared, "a great garden with a new sensory room". There were limitations to allow free flow access to the outdoor space for older children due to the position of their room. However, children had daily access multiple times of the day. We discussed ways the staff team could develop this further by utilising staff deployment more effectively. This would allow children more ownership of their decisions and reduce waiting times when going for walks. This approach could improve children's pace of day while they explored their interests.

Language, literacy and numeracy opportunities were rich and meaningful to children. Staff observed children's developmental stages within these areas and created activities to help them develop these skills further. Staff used language such as, over, under and on top when taking part in activities with children. For example, when children went outside, they created obstacle courses with loose parts and staff encouraged them to use the same language. Staff were skilled in extending these opportunities which helped children's sustained engagement. This helped children to challenge their problem solving and language skills through their play ideas that interested them.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced kind, nurturing and caring interactions from staff. Staff recognised and valued the strong and trusting relationships they had developed with children and families. A parent told us, "we have a very positive relationship with the staff at nursery and have built friendly relationships". Another parent shared, "the staff are all lovely, vary caring and know all parents and children well". These relationships helped staff to build positive attachments with children which helped them feel secure and loved.

Children's rights were respected through staff taking a nurturing and caring approach to their personal routines. For example, staff got down to children's level and sensitively asked if they wanted help when going to the bathroom or being mindful of children's dignity when using changing spaces. Initiatives such as, SIMOA (safety, impact, monitor, observe and act) from the Care Inspectorate were used effectively. This was shared with families through home learning opportunities. One child shared, "This is SIMOA, he keeps us safe when we go on walks". This further supported children to develop an understanding on how to keep themselves safe in different situations that were meaningful to them.

Children's mealtime experiences were mostly sociable and relaxed. They were able to choose their meals and develop their independence skills through self-serving. Children in the older rooms helped set up their lunch tables with table cloths, flowers, cutlery and napkins. This helped create a welcoming space for children to have their meals. Meals were nutritious and allergies or parental preferences were respected. Alternative meals were provided for children who did not want to have what was on offer. At times, staff became task focused which meant that they were unable to sit with children consistently at the tables. This resulted in missed opportunities for staff to engage in conversations with children in a relaxed and unhurried environment. Leaders recognised opportunities to further strengthen interaction with children during mealtimes and had already implemented changes to staffing arrangements. This would help support more consistent engagement with children. This demonstrated a reflective culture and a commitment to continuous improvement to ensure outcomes for children were sustained and enhanced.

Children had personal plans in place that gathered important information such as, medical needs, dietary requirements, strategies, likes and dislikes. This helped the staff team to develop an understanding of the individual needs for each child. These were reviewed with families in line with current guidance. Staff were knowledgeable about children's plans and used them effectively to provide consistent support. As a result, children's changing needs were recognised through effective personal planning.

Children benefitted from a service that recognised the importance of working in partnership with families. This was a significant strength of the service. Children benefitted from these relationships as they positively influenced their care and support. There was a dedicated parent committee who were involved in identifying improvements for the service, gathering feedback and information from parents across the service. A parent told us, "there is a parents committee, regular surveys and they are also open to discussions through parents evenings, emails or face to face". Another parent shared, "there is a parent association team and anyone is free to give constructive feedback". These strong links demonstrated families were respected as they helped to enhance children's outcomes and experiences.

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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