Networking Key Services Limited (NKS)
Day Care of Children

Darroch Annexe
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Telephone: 01312 211 915

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 June 2026

Service provided by:
Networking Key Services Limiuted

Service provider number:
SP2003002988

Service no:
CS2003012096

About the service

Networking Key Services Limited is an early learning and childcare service based in Tollcross, Edinburgh. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time, aged from three months to 14 years of whom no more than nine are under two years.

At the time of the inspection, the oldest age group of children using the service was three years of age.

The service can be provided across two playrooms, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor of the building. An enclosed play space was located at the front the building.

The organisation also operates groups for members of the community and various other support services.

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

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 4 June 2026 between 12:15 and 17:15. We returned on Monday 8 June 2026 between 08:45 and 15:30. One inspector from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:
- received 3 responses from parents to our questionnaire
- received 1 response from staff to our questionnaire
    - spoke with two parents
- interacted with children
- spoke with staff
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within the quality indicators 'Leadership and management of staff and resources' and 'Nurturing care and support'.

Key messages

Building positive relationships with children and families was part of the service's ethos. Staff expressed genuine care towards children. Children enjoyed interacting with staff as they developed their knowledge and skills through play.

Staff were able to tell us about children's progress and achievements. Online learning journals were used to document these. It was clear how staff had enabled and empowered children to succeed.

A legislative requirement made at the last inspection had been met.

Four out of six areas for improvement made at the last inspection had been addressed. The service should now take action to address the outstanding areas for improvement.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Building positive relationships with children and families was part of the service's ethos. Staff expressed genuine care towards children. Children enjoyed interacting with staff as they developed their knowledge and skills through play. The service facilitated opportunities for families to come together to celebrate festivals, sharing songs and food. This contributed to a strong sense of belonging. The staff team was committed to building upon their partnership with parents, for example through more meaningful involvement in reviewing children's personal plans and informally during children's sessions.

An improvement plan had been thoughtfully created to help improve children's play experiences and personal plans. These reflected some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan considered what success would look like and tools that would be used to help measure success. However, the plan was yet to be reviewed and evaluated. We could see that some progress had been made in relation to the improvements identified, for example we observed staff facilitate positive interactions. However, there were gaps in practice that required further attention. This included improving the quality of some spaces within the environment to help promote sustained engagement and extend children's thinking and skills. Regular reviews of the improvement plan would help the service to evaluate the impact the plan has on children's experiences and manage the pace of change throughout the year. An area for improvement made at the last inspection in relation to quality assurance had not been met and has been restated **(see area for improvement 1 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').**

Appraisals were used to formally acknowledge staff strengths and identify areas for development. We advised the manager to strengthen some of the positive feedback given to staff with supporting practice observations. This will help staff to reflect on their practice by using relatable examples which they can then embed in practice for children's benefit. Tailored support had been provided by the manager to help develop staff knowledge and skills, for example to improve the quality of observations. Recent recorded observations captured more elements of a quality observation. This meant that the manger's leadership had been effective in improving the documentation of children's learning and development. The manager was receptive to our advice to ensure that staff action plans created during staff appraisals have specific tasks, with clear responsibilities and timescales. These should be reviewed and evaluated at subsequent meetings to promote accountability with a focus on assessing the impact of any changes on children's wellbeing and general development.

The manager was committed to increasing opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and skills through accessing training courses. The service had recently connected with a training provider. Before undertaking courses, we encouraged the manager to facilitate conversations with staff to identify what they hoped to gain from a course. Staff can then be empowered to reflect against this following completion of the training and provide examples of how the training has contributed towards positive outcomes for children.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces — 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Since the last inspection, the layout of the environment had been improved to create more space for children, particularly the younger children, to move more freely. In addition to this, play and learning resources had been enhanced to better reflect the younger children's ages and stages of development. Resources were accessible to promote choice and independence. These improvements benefited children's wellbeing and overall development.

However, some spaces required further investment to spark children's curiosity to explore and provide a sense of challenge to extend their development. For example, resources within the home corner could be improved to reflect a typical home environment to inspire imaginary and creative play. References within the home corner to numeracy and literacy could also be increased. The service should continue to reflect upon the quality of spaces to provide breadth and depth to children's play and learning. This will help enable children to engage in meaningful play for sustained periods of time and achieve developmental progress.

Outside, play opportunities encouraged children to be active and enhanced their creativity. For example, children confidently rode on three wheeled bikes and had planted herbs which could be used in the mud kitchen. Similarly to the indoor environment, the physical presentation of some areas could be improved to promote deeper levels of engagement and increase children's sense of value.

Generally, all children went outside at the same time. This limited children's choice to make decisions when they went outdoors. The manager should continue to oversee staff deployment to ensure that staff are consistently attuned and responsive to children's individual needs and preferences in relation to indoor and outdoor play. For example, as the session progressed, some children remained inside. This benefited their individual needs; for one child who was tired, a staff member supported them to relax and fall asleep, and another child benefited from a quieter space and personalised attention. However, after a group singing activity, some children's energy levels and emotions became heightened. It may have been helpful for staff to have responded by providing the opportunity to go in the garden to help regulate emotions.

We highlighted some cleanliness and maintenance issues that needed to be improved. For example, there was chipped paint on the walls and ceiling within the sleep room which did not contribute to the creation of a cosy space to support children's wellbeing. While the downstairs toilet facilities were clean, the nappy changing area upstairs was not of an equivalent standard. The service took action to address this during the inspection and we were satisfied with the outcome. The manager should continue to ensure a high standard of cleanliness is consistently maintained throughout the service as part of quality assurance. This will support children to be healthy and increase their sense of worth.

Children's safety benefited from improvements to the security of the building. A procedure was in place in relation to managing access to the building along with the action to take if an unknown person arrived at the service. However, this was not documented and as a result could be misunderstood and not adhered to as intended. We asked the service to formally document their procedure and make it available to staff. We were satisfied with the document produced and asked that the service review this regularly to assess its impact and effectiveness. During the inspection, the service was receptive to our advice to replicate the door lock used in the ground floor playroom upstairs so that the most effective control measures were used across the building to help keep children safe.

During the inspection, children mostly used the playroom on the first floor. Toilet facilities were located on the ground floor. Staff deployment was managed well to respond to children's toileting needs in a dignified way. The service was aware of the numbers of children in relation to toilet and nappy changing facilities as reflective in current practice guidance. Toilet and nappy changing facilities continued to be part of the service's improvement planning; the service knew to refer to relevant practice guidance when making any potential changes to help promote children's health and wellbeing.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where there are important strengths within the setting's work, however some aspects could benefit from improvement.

Children's wellbeing and development benefited from the quality of interactions facilitated by staff. Staff were attentive; they observed and acknowledged what children were doing. For example, staff expressed enthusiasm towards a child who was mark making using paint. This helped children to feel seen and heard and motivated them to engage in purposeful play.

Interactions helped to progress children's communication skills. Staff positioned themselves at children's level with relaxed body language to promote eye contact, named objects to increase vocabulary and used open ended questions to extend children's thinking. Staff facilitated singing songs with children. Children confidently expressed their preferences for song choices and joined in with the words and actions. Staff celebrated children's engagement which contributed to their self-esteem.

While there was a variety of play opportunities, as detailed under quality indicator 'Children thrive and develop in quality spaces', the quality of some of these should be further developed. This will help to inspire children's play and broaden their learning and development.

Staff were able to tell us about children's progress and achievements. Online learning journals were used to document these. It was clear how staff had enabled and empowered children to succeed. For example, children had learnt to walk and developed their numeracy and literacy skills. Additional approaches to quality assurance would strengthen the quality of observations and next steps in children's learning. This will help to ensure that children receive the right support and challenge in their play and learning.

Planning reflected children's shared interests. Staff considered ways to build upon these and could identify how children's development had benefited from the resources and learning opportunities provided. We advised the service to develop their documentation of this. Depending on children's ages and stages of development, we encouraged the service to consult more with children on what they know about a particular topic and what they would like to find out to empower them to lead their learning more. This would strengthen a child centred approach to planning.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where there are important strengths within the setting's work, however some aspects could benefit from improvement.

Staff had formed positive relationships with children. Secure attachments had been developed; children used staff as a safe base to feel empowered to express their growing independence and confidence. Staff demonstrated genuine care towards children, for example expressing terms of endearment and offering affection in the form of cuddles. This supported children to feel loved and valued. Parents comments included; "We trust the staff; they are so kind and caring and teach our children lots of skills and fun games and songs".

During the last inspection a legislative requirement was made in relation to staffing arrangements. Staffing levels on both days of the inspection exceeded minimum staff to child ratios. Records sampled showed that ratios had been maintained. The procedure for documenting staffing arrangements had improved. These were completed by a leader and verified by a manager each session. The staff team was well established which provided familiarity for children and helped to promote continuity of care. An effective contingency plan was in place if staff were absent. As a result, this requirement was met.

Personal plans were completed in collaboration with children's parents and reviewed regularly. However, the manager had identified that children's personal plans needed to be developed to ensure that the information gathered was valuable and could be used purposefully. The review process should be more extensive and capture parent's voice more to show a strong partnership in working collectively to identify and meet children's individual needs. We advised the manager to formally audit personal plans to ensure that their aspirations for quality personal plans are embedded in practice. An area for improvement about personal planning made at the last inspection had not been met and has been restated **(see area for improvement 5 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').**

While staff could identify the steps they would take if a child's medication did not relieve symptoms or there was a deterioration in a child's health, we advised that this needed to be clearly documented within the child's health care plan. This will help make the management of children's medication more efficient and better align with practice guidance.

Mealtimes benefited children's wellbeing as they had a relaxed pace. Staff sat alongside children which helped to promote meaningful connections. We highlighted opportunities where children's independence and life skills could be promoted, for example helping to prepare food and selecting their own dishes and cutlery, particularly for the older children.

Sleep times were well managed to promote children's safety. Staff supervised children as they slept. In addition to this, observations were documented at regular intervals to help ensure children's safety and wellbeing. Sufficient spacing was provided between mattresses to enable effective observations to be carried out and to provide adequate space for children to move and promote their dignity. Effective infection, prevention and control measures were in place in relation to the use of sleep mats and covers. This contributed towards healthy outcomes for children.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 19 January 2026, to ensure that children's needs are met effectively and sensitively by the right number of staff, the provider must ensure staffing arrangements are well planned.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

a) Ensure staffing arrangements are planned based on the needs of the children attending each day,
b) develop robust and effective systems for planning, implementing and recording staffing arrangements,
c) implement effective quality assurance processes that enable any staffing issues to be identified and effectively managed.

This is in order to comply with section 7(1)(a) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (3.15).

This requirement was made on 20 November 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

Staffing levels on both days of the inspection exceeded minimum staff to child ratios. Records sampled showed that ratios had been maintained. The procedure for documenting staffing arrangements had improved. These were completed by a leader and verified by a manager each session. The staff team was well established which provided familiarity for children and helped to promote continuity of care. An effective contingency plan was in place if staff were absent.

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

To support high quality outcomes for children and families, the service should improve and embed effective quality assurance processes that monitor the quality of the service and support improvements to be made.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which 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 30 October 2024.

Action taken since then

An improvement plan had been thoughtfully created to help improve children's play experiences and personal plans. These reflected some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan considered what success would look like and tools that would be used to help measure success. However, the plan was yet to be reviewed and evaluated. We could see that some progress had been made in relation to the improvements identified, for example we observed staff facilitate positive interactions. However, there were gaps in practice that required further attention. This included improving the quality of some spaces within the environment to help promote sustained engagement and extend children's thinking and skills. Regular reviews of the improvement plan would help the service to evaluate the impact the plan has on children's experiences and manage the pace of change throughout the year.

This area for improvement has not been met and has been restated.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure the overall security of the building, the provider should improve the systems and practices in place for managing exits and entry points.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS, 5.19).

This area for improvement was made on 20 November 2025.

Action taken since then

Children's safety benefited from improvements to the security of the building. A procedure was in place in relation to managing access to the building along with the action to take if an unknown person arrived at the service. However, this was not documented and as a result could be misunderstood and not adhered to as intended. We asked the service to formally document their procedure and make it available to staff. We were satisfied with the document produced and asked that the service review this regularly to assess its impact and effectiveness. During the inspection, the service was receptive to our advice to replicate the door lock used in the ground floor playroom upstairs so that the most effective control measures were used across the building to help keep children safe.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To improve the quality of facilities, the provider should ensure the facilities align with good practice guidance. This would include but not be limited to, taking action to address the lack of access to toilets for children on the upper floor; and improving the downstairs nappy changing facilities to reflect current good practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.18).

This is to ensure facilities are consistent with guidance documents, 'Space to Grow and Thrive', (Care Inspectorate, 2024) and 'Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders)' (Care Inspectorate, updated 2025).

This area for improvement was made on 20 November 2025.

Action taken since then

During the inspection, children mostly used the playroom on the first floor. Toilet facilities were located on the ground floor. Staff deployment was managed well to respond to children's toileting needs in a dignified way. The service was aware of the numbers of children in relation to toilet and nappy changing facilities as reflective in current practice guidance. Toilet and nappy changing facilities continued to be part of the service's improvement planning; the service knew to refer to relevant practice guidance when making any potential changes to help promote children's health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure all children have access to developmentally appropriate spaces that promote their play and learning, the service should review and improve the provision for younger children and babies.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS, 5.23) and 'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors' (HSCS, 1.25).

This area for improvement was made on 30 October 2026.

Action taken since then

The layout of the environment had been improved to create more space for children, particularly the younger children, to move more freely. In addition to this, play and learning resources had been enhanced to better reflect the younger children's ages and stages of development. Resources were accessible to promote choice and independence. These improvements benefited children's wellbeing and overall development.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To consistently meet children's needs and plan responsive care, personal planning approaches should be improved. This would include but not be limited to:- ensuring plans are reviewed and updated with parents every six months or sooner if required,- ensuring staff regularly consult children's plan and record information that helps them to understand children's varied and changing needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: '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 30 October 2024.

Action taken since then

Personal plans were completed in collaboration with children's parents and reviewed regularly. However, the manager had identified that children's personal plans needed to be developed to ensure that the information gathered was valuable and could be used purposefully. The review process should be more extensive and capture parent's voice more to show a strong partnership in working collectively to identify and meet children's individual needs. We advised the manager to formally audit personal plans to ensure that their aspirations for quality personal plans are embedded in practice.

This area for improvement had not been met and has been restated.

Previous area for improvement 6

To maintain children's safety and wellbeing, the provider should ensure staff follow safe sleep practices for all children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 20 November 2025.

Action taken since then

Sleep times were well managed to promote children's safety. Staff supervised children as they slept. In addition to this, observations were documented at regular intervals to help ensure children's safety and wellbeing. Sufficient spacing was provided between mattresses to enable effective observations to be carried out and to provide adequate space for children to move and promote their dignity. Effective infection, prevention and control measures were in place in relation to the use of sleep mats and covers. This contributed towards healthy outcomes for children.

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.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children experience high quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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