St. Serf's Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Thrashbush Road
Thrashbush
Airdrie
ML6 6QU

Telephone: 01236 632082

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
9 September 2026

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015353

About the service

St. Serf's Nursery Class is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 56 children aged from 3 years to those not of an age to attend primary school. The service is part of St. Serf's Primary School located in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire.

Children are cared for in one playroom which has direct access to a large enclosed outdoor play space. The service is situated close to shops, parks, transport links and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was a short-notice announced inspection which took place on 7 September 2026 between 12:00 and 17:00, 8 September 2026 between 08:30 and 16:15, and 9 September 2026 between 09:30-11:45. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. This was a short-notice announced inspection carried out at the same time as a further inspection from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). We call this an alongside inspection, which means both the Care Inspectorate and HMIE are visiting the service at the same time, but will produce separate reports.

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:

- spent time with children using the service
- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with two parents
- spoke with the management and staff
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances.

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, an improvement was identified relating to core assurances within the quality indicator 'Nurturing care and support'.

Key messages

- Staff formed warm and nurturing relationships with children. Children were relaxed, confident and comfortable in the service.
- Leaders planned to review the service's vision, values and aims with children, families and staff. This will help ensure they reflect the nursery's context and are meaningful to its community.
- There was a clear focus on improvement. Leaders understood priority areas for development and remained committed to making positive changes for children.
- Children were engaged in their play throughout the day. They were motivated by the resources and experiences available indoors and outdoors.
- Leaders should continue to develop risk assessment processes to identify and address potential hazards promptly.
- Staff would benefit from further developing their observation and assessment skills. This will help them provide appropriate challenge and support children's progress.

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	4 - Good
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 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Leadership and Management of Staff and Resources

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

Leaders planned to review and update the service's vision, values and aims, which were currently based on those of the primary school. They planned to consult with children, families and staff to ensure these reflected the nursery's context and were meaningful to its community. Once agreed, staff could use the values in daily conversations and experiences to help children understand and put them into practice as they play, learn and develop.

There was a clear focus on improvement. Leaders introduced changes gradually, giving staff time to develop their knowledge and skills. This showed they were focused on building strong foundations before introducing further changes.

Leaders used well-planned quality assurance processes, supported by a quality assurance calendar. They had a clear understanding of priority areas for development and remained committed to making positive changes for children. Self-evaluation had led to improvements in practice. For example, mealtime experiences had improved and learning spaces had been enhanced to provide children with a wider range of learning opportunities.

To build on self-evaluation and quality assurance processes, leaders should continue to use monitoring activities, audits and action plans regularly. These approaches should become embedded in everyday practice. Leaders should also strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes to provide a clearer picture of strengths, progress and areas for development. This will help them plan effectively and measure the impact of changes on children's experiences and outcomes.

There had been positive progress in involving children and families in service improvement. For example, children were consulted about lunchtime arrangements and voted to create their own placemats for mealtimes. This gave children a meaningful voice in decisions that affected their daily experiences. Leaders should continue to build on this approach by creating more opportunities for children and families to share their views and help shape the work of the service. This will help ensure they feel valued and included in decision-making.

Leaders supported staff to develop their leadership skills through specific responsibilities. This work was at an early stage and should continue to build staff confidence, skills and leadership capacity.

Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and safer recruitment practices. Newer staff told us they had been well supported when starting in their role. They received information about policies, procedures and expectations, which helped them understand their responsibilities. Leaders recognised that the induction process could be strengthened further. A more structured approach to reflection and learning would help staff to consider how new knowledge can be applied in their daily work. This would support professional development and improve outcomes for children.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and development

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

Almost all children were engaged in their play throughout the day. They were motivated by the resources and experiences available indoors and outdoors. Staff provided opportunities to develop children's language, literacy and numeracy skills. Stories, songs and conversations helped children communicate and share their ideas.

The pace and routine of the day supported extended periods of uninterrupted play. This allowed children to become fully involved in their chosen activities. Children made informed choices about what they wanted to do and their voices were reflected in floor books. The environment supported them to explore their interests and ideas. This helped staff plan meaningful experiences that children enjoyed. A parent told us, "My child is doing great in nursery, he is well supported and making good progress."

Some areas of the indoor and outdoor environment could be developed further. Staff should consider how each area supports children's development and extends their play. In some areas, fewer resources with a clearer purpose would support deeper engagement. This would help children become more involved in their play. The mud kitchen area outdoors would also benefit from improved organisation and presentation. A more inviting layout would encourage children to access the area independently. It would also encourage curiosity, creativity and exploration.

Due to the layout of the outdoor play space, staff could not always provide the same level of support outdoors. Staff needed to supervise children across a large area. Leaders should consider how staff deployment can be used more effectively. This would help ensure children benefit from high-quality interactions throughout the day.

Further coaching and guidance would help staff develop the quality of their interactions. Approaches such as shared thinking should become embedded in practice. Staff should also use 'wondering aloud' and developmentally appropriate questions. This would help extend children's thinking and deepen their learning through play.

Planning was improving and staff now planned experiences around children's interests. Staff were also becoming more confident in adapting spaces to meet children's needs. This helped make experiences more meaningful and engaging for children. As a result, children had more choice and more opportunities to lead their own experiences. We saw this in practice through activities such as bug hunting and measuring. Leaders should continue to support staff to develop their understanding of how children learn through play. This will help staff build on children's interests and support progress. It will also help them plan experiences that meet children's individual needs.

Staff would benefit from continuing to develop their skills in observing and assessing children's progress. This will help them identify next steps more effectively and help them to provide the right level of challenge.

Observation and assessment approaches were developing and staff were beginning to gather information about children's progress. However, observations did not always clearly identify learning or record meaningful next steps. As a result, opportunities to extend learning were sometimes missed.

Targets were identified for individual children. However, they were not always reviewed or updated regularly. This made it difficult to track progress over time and identify when new targets were needed.

During discussions, leaders recognised that planning needed to be more specific. This would help staff support children's developing skills and stages of development. Staff would benefit from reflecting on children's progress more regularly. They should also evaluate the impact of planned experiences. This will help ensure future planning meets children's needs and supports continued progress.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing Care and support

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

Staff formed warm and nurturing relationships with children. Children were relaxed, confident and comfortable in the service. They approached staff for support, shared their achievements and expressed their needs. This demonstrated trusting and secure relationships.

Children's personal routines were supported well. Staff helped children develop social skills and relationships and comfortable spaces were available for relaxation. We discussed enhancing the quiet area with a smaller, enclosed space, such as a den or alcove. This would support children who need time to rest, regulate their emotions or enjoy quieter experiences.

Children's achievements were recognised and celebrated. Parents were encouraged to share achievements from home, helping to strengthen links between home and nursery. Children were also encouraged to take on responsibilities and contribute to nursery life. Praise and recognition helped build confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Children and families were well supported when starting at the service. Staff took time to get to know them and understand their needs. This helped children settle successfully and develop positive relationships. Transitions throughout the day were calm and responsive to children's needs. Children moved confidently between experiences and remained engaged in play. The introduction of a rolling lunch had been well managed, giving children greater choice and flexibility while reducing interruptions to play.

Mealtimes had improved since the last inspection. Children developed independence through self-service and made choices about their meals. Meals were nutritionally balanced, and drinking water was available throughout the session. Staff promoted conversation and positive mealtime experiences. Children did not routinely wash their hands after eating. Embedding this practice will support good hygiene and wellbeing.

Medication was stored appropriately and in line with best practice guidance. Leaders had identified ways to strengthen medication records and planned to introduce a new format. Audits were in place, and parents were involved in reviewing long-term medication records. Reviews could be strengthened by recording any changes to children's health needs, medication or support requirements.

Improvements had been made to the outdoor environment since the last inspection. However, some gaps remained at the bottom of the perimeter fence and lower sections could provide footholds for climbing. Staff should also ensure loose parts are not stored beside fences. Leaders should continue to develop risk assessment processes to identify and address potential hazards promptly **(see area for improvement 1)**.

Personal plans had improved since the last inspection. Parents reviewed plans and agreed targets, helping to support children's development and strengthen partnership working. Targets should be reviewed regularly to ensure children receive support at the right time. A new section for significant events will help staff build a fuller picture of children's experiences and changing needs. Monitoring and audits will help embed this approach across the service.

Parents told us they felt included and informed. They said staff listened to their views and supported their children's needs. Parents also felt transitions into the service were well planned and helped children settle successfully.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's safety and wellbeing, the provider should improve risk assessments. Risk assessments should clearly identify potential hazards and the steps needed to reduce risks within the service and during community outings. A balanced approach should be taken to ensure children can safely explore, take appropriate risks and develop their skills, confidence and independence.

This should include, but not be limited to:

1. the outdoor play area
2. walks and visits within the local community.

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

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 children's wellbeing, learning, and development, the provider should ensure that effective planning is in place to meet the needs of the children.

This should include but not be limited to:

1. identifying and supporting children's health and wellbeing needs;
2. delivering play and learning experiences that meet children's needs and interests; and
3. agreeing personal plans in consultation with parents, staff and other professionals.

This is to ensure that 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)
and
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 18 June 2025.

Action taken since then

Staff knew children well and could clearly explain their individual needs, including any allergies or medical conditions. They described the ways they supported children to stay safe, healthy and included. Personal plans contained useful information and were reviewed regularly with parents.

Play and learning experiences had improved since the last inspection. Staff were involved in planning activities and took account of children's interests when supporting their learning. The learning environment offered a wider range of resources, giving children more opportunities to explore, investigate and be creative. The next step is to help staff develop a deeper understanding of how children learn through play so that planning can better support children's learning and development.

This area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's wellbeing, learning, and development, the provider should ensure that the outdoor play area provides high-quality play and learning experiences and are well maintained and secured.

This should include, but not be limited to, having a secured perimeter and children having access to high-quality materials that inspire their imagination, curiosity, and thinking.

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

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19) and 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was made on 18 June 2025.

Action taken since then

Improvements had been made since the last inspection to enhance the safety of the outdoor play area. For example, uneven surfaces had been repaired and perimeter fencing had been made more secure. Children now had access to a wider range of play materials that supported their imagination, curiosity and thinking skills. Further development of outdoor resources would help to build on these opportunities and provide children with even richer experiences for exploration, creativity and learning.

This area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The service should submit the information required by the Care Inspectorate to undertake their regulatory duties. This includes notifications of significant events, such as accidents, which result in medical care or protection concerns.

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

'I use a service that is well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

This area for improvement was made on 18 June 2025.

Action taken since then

Leaders had a good understanding of the information they needed to send to the Care Inspectorate. They could clearly explain what should be reported and why.

This included notifying the Care Inspectorate about significant events, such as accidents requiring medical treatment, and any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children.

This area for improvement was 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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

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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