Heron House Early Years Crookston
Day Care of Children

959 Crookston Road
Pollok
Glasgow
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Telephone: 01418 105 777

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 July 2026

Service provided by:
The Play House

Service provider number:
SP2004005678

Service no:
CS2004058417

About the service

Heron House Early Years Crookston is a nursery based in the Crookston area of Glasgow. The service is in partnership with Glasgow City Council to provide commissioned places for children. The service is close to local primary schools, transport routes, shops, parks, and other amenities.

The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 36 children. Consisting of six children six weeks to under two years, 10 children two years to under three years and 20 children three years up to primary school age.

At the time of inspection there were 16 children present on the first day and 18 children present on the second day.

The service operates from a large former detached house. The accommodation consists of three playrooms and a separate room where younger children can sleep. There is a secure wrap around garden with a large outdoor sheltered area. There is changing and toilet facilities for children, an office, and catering and staff facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 and 14 July 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 using the service
- reviewed electronic feedback from 14 families
- spoke with staff and management
- 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 service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and settled in the service.
- Staff had positive relationships with children and families.
- The setting was welcoming, comfortable and stimulating for children.
- Leaders should continue to work alongside staff to maximise children's opportunities for outdoor play.
- Leaders should review and strengthen infection control procedures at mealtimes.
- Leaders were friendly, visible and approachable, which strengthened relationships with families.
- Self-evaluation and quality assurance were having a positive impact on outcomes for children and families.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	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

Leadership and management of staff and resources

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

The manager had been in post since June 2025 and a new depute had joined the service in April this year. They were friendly, approachable and engaged well with the inspection process. They had a clear vision for the service, and were receptive to feedback and willing to make improvements to support positive outcomes for children. Parents and staff told us they could approach the manager if they needed any support or help. One parent commented, "I feel the service has gotten much better with the new manager in post. They have made many positive changes."

The service vision, values and aims were created in consultation with families a few years ago. We found key aspects such as, providing a safe, stimulating and caring environment for children were reflected in practice. This contributed to a positive and nurturing environment for children. Leaders shared they had plans to review the settings vision, values and aims in consultation with staff, children and families. We agreed this would be beneficial to capture the views and aspirations and reflect what was important to current staff, children and families in the service.

Leaders understood the importance of self-evaluation for continuous improvement. We found processes had been strengthened and could see improvements had been made since the previous inspection. Leaders recognised they now needed time to fully embed processes to show sustained improvement.

Regular consultation to support ongoing self-evaluation was taking place with staff, children and families through questionnaires, meetings and daily conversations. We discussed with leaders how feedback of actions taken from consultation would enable children and families to see how their voice had helped shape service development.

Information being gathered was used to inform the service improvement plan making it meaningful and relevant to the service and children. We found some evidence of progress within the plan. For example, staff had been working closely with Glasgow City Council's leader of learning to enhance literacy based experiences and spaces for children. This had resulted in spaces being resourced to provide opportunities for children of all ages to explore mark making and books. Staff used their learning to build on children's skills naturally through songs, stories and conversations. This contributed positively to children's learning and development.

At the previous inspection we made an area for improvement to ensure children were safe and protected from harm through safe recruitment and induction procedures. We found improvements to this had been made quickly. For further information see the outstanding area for improvement section of this report.

Staff spoke positively about their recruitment and induction experiences. Newer staff had been paired with mentors, which they found reassuring and highly supportive. Regular staff meetings, wellbeing sessions and appraisals supported staff in their day to day responsibilities as well as their longer term professional development. This positively contributed to staff's motivation to deliver quality care to children.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

Children experience high quality spaces

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

Children were cared for in a bright, clean, comfortable, and welcoming environment. Playrooms offered space to meet children's needs. The setting made good use of the indoor environments, these were furnished to a high standard. This sent children the message they mattered.

Environments were structured to take account of children's stages of development and learning. Resources were age and stage appropriate and easily accessible to children. This further promoted their independence and ability to lead their own play. There were cosy spaces for children to rest and relax, contributing to supporting children's health and wellbeing. One parent commented, "They have plenty spaces to chill and relax so if they ever need a bit of quiet time they can go to their cosy space."

Children's toilets had recently been upgraded and refurbished. New sinks, toilets and décor contributed to a bright, clean, safe and hygienic environment for children. Changing areas were warm, clean, tidy and offered privacy. This enabled children's personal care needs to be met in a dignified way that supports their health and wellbeing.

The setting had a large, warp around garden that could be directly accessed from two playrooms. On the first day of inspection we found children's access to the outdoor environment was restricted due to the structure of the daily routine. This resulted in children having limited time outdoors to support their play, physical development and wellbeing.

We discussed with leaders the importance of all children having more opportunities to access the outdoor environment and suggested a more free flow approach could support this. On the second day of inspection we found children's access to the outdoor environment had improved. As a result children of all ages were deeply engaged in play and learning outdoors and having fun with their friends, enriching their overall experience. The service should continue with plans to maximise all children's access to the outdoor environment.

The service had identified improvements were needed to the outdoor environment and some areas had been developed. This included the side garden offering opportunities for physical development though an obstacle course and small climbing frame. A large, well resourced sheltered area supported children's, curiosity, creativity and imaginative play. One parent shared with us, "The outdoor area has gotten better but could still do with some work to make it nice for the children to play in. Although I am aware this is being addressed."

At the previous inspection concerns about building security had been raised. We found the service had taken quick action to address this and improvements had been made. This included locks on doors, all children, families and visitors using the main entrance and double locks on outside gates. We were satisfied actions taken supported children's safety and security. For further information please refer to the outstanding areas for improvement section of this report.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Play, learning and developing

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

Children were happy, confident and engaged in their environment. They had formed positive friendships that supported their social and emotional wellbeing. Children demonstrated confidence and independence in leading and extending their own play and learning. Children and parents spoke positively about experiences on offer. Children told us, "I like the bikes" and "I like stories and all the toys." One parent commented, "there are lots of sensory and creative activities which my little one loves. This has helped to develop fine motor skills, hand eye coordination, creativity and curiosity."

Staff were engaged in play with children, many interactions demonstrated responsiveness and connection. These positive engagements contributed to a supportive environment for children's learning and development. Some staff would benefit from further development of their ability to challenge and extend children's learning and play opportunities. Leaders had identified this and shared plans of how staff would be supported to develop their skills. We acknowledged this would help enrich children's learning experiences.

Planning systems had been reviewed and updated. Children experienced a balance of planned and responsive experiences. Some play experiences supported children's numeracy, language and literacy skills. For example, children were interested in using materials for mark making both indoors and outdoors, singing a phonics song and generating words from a sound. Numeracy skills were supported through puzzles, and using construction for counting, and naming, sorting and matching colours.

Younger children were engaged in meaningful play experiences that supported curiosity, exploration and confidence. Children independently explored sensory resources such as coloured rice, water, animals and loose parts, using their senses. This helped develop their fine motor skills as they scooped, poured, mixed and manipulated materials.

Families were given opportunities to attend progress meetings and observations of children's play and learning were shared with parents through online journals. One parent commented, "The learning journals are a great thing. The staff are always keeping me up to date on my child's progress and how they are doing." This supported parents to feel involved in their child's care, play and learning.

Learning journals were being updated regularly, we could see some improvements in the quality of observations being recorded. Leaders were aware of the differing skill levels within the team and were actively monitoring practice and providing targeted support. Over time, this was expected to contribute to a more consistent approach to high quality observations that would support children's learning.

Children's play, learning and development was enhanced through strong connections to the local community. Parents appreciated this and shared, "My child has been able to spend time in the local community. Going to the park to collect conkers, to the local library and Bookbug." (Bookbug is a story and singing session for children offered in local libraries).

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Nurturing care and support

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

Children's care and learning routines were delivered with kindness and compassion. Staff were kind and respectful towards children. This helped most children feel secure and contributed to the positive relationships they had with staff. Parents valued the care their children received and told us, "the most positive thing is the welcoming, friendly, supportive staff. They understand my child's needs, provide person centred support and make them feel included and confident."

Overall mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried. Older children were proud of their responsibility to help set up the lunch tables. Children had opportunities to develop their independence skills through self-serving food, pouring drinks and tidying away their items. We suggested opportunities to promote independence could be extended to younger children's lunch routines. Staff sat with children and engaged them in social chat and conversations. This made lunch time a safe and sociable experience for children.

We found some improvements were needed to infection control procedures for older children's lunch experience. This included cleaning tables between courses and keeping used items separately from food and tableware for children's second course. We discussed this with leaders and were satisfied steps would be taken to address this.

After lunch younger children were supported to transition from their playroom to the sleep room. Staff carried out tasks in a way that meant one member of staff was supporting children in the playroom. We observed children in this playroom becoming upset. The staff member in the playroom tried hard to comfort them through cuddles, reassuring words and gentle distraction. However, was unable to consistently meet children's individual needs at this time. We discussed with leaders how improved communication between staff and better sharing of tasks would enable staff to provide comfort and support to meet all children's needs at busy transition times.

The provider and leaders discussed responsibilities and tasks during transitions with staff over the course of inspection. We were reassured by actions taken and observed this had improved on the second day of inspection.

Personal plans contained relevant information that supported staff to understand children's routines and preferences. We found other information, such as, specific wellbeing targets and support were not consistently recorded. However we could see that these needs were understood, communicated and were being met in the moment. Recording this information more consistently would ensure all staff have timely access to key updates, supporting continuity of care for children. We discussed this with leaders and changes were made to plans over the course of the inspection to record this information. We were satisfied changes made would further support staff in meeting children's care, support and wellbeing needs.

Transitions from home to nursery and when children moved to another age group, were planned and implemented with sensitivity and care. These were strengthened through visits and working closely with families to support children's emotional wellbeing and security. One parent told us, "I have got to know all staff that support my little one. They are good at listening and I can tell they genuinely care about the children."

Relationships with children and families were at the heart of the service. Leaders and staff had created a warm and welcoming environment. Parents and children were warmly welcomed into the setting supporting children and their families to feel valued. Relationships were strengthened through opportunities for family engagement. This included, progress meetings, and celebratory events such as, graduation, Halloween and Christmas parties. This contributed to fostering positive relationships, involvement and a sense of belonging.

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 keep children safe the provider should ensure secure entry procedures to the premises are in place and maintained. This should include, but is not limited to, preventing children from exiting the building unsupervised and preventing unauthorised individuals entering the premises.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:
"My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.17).

This area for improvement was made on 15 August 2025.

Action taken since then

We found the service had made significant improvements to building security. Locks had been fitted to doors to prevent children exiting the building unsupervised and preventing unauthorised individuals entering the building.

The secure front door was now the main access and exit point for all children, families and visitors. Leaders and staff were responsible for controlling entry at all times and updating children's registers and visitor sign in logs. This supported close monitoring of who was accessing and leaving the building.

We were satisfied actions taken contributed to a safe and secure environment for children.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure that children are safe and protected from harm, the provider should make sure that staff are safety recruited and inducted. This should include, but not be limited to, ensuring all staff working with children have submitted an application to register with the regulatory body within three months of staring employment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state,
"I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited." (HSCS 4.24).

This area for improvement was made on 15 August 2025.

Action taken since then

We found the service had made significant improvements. Clear recruitment and registration processes had been implemented that followed safer staffing guidance.

Essential pre-employment checks were being carried out including all staff having a current PVG before starting in the setting. We found all staff were registered with SSSC. A new trainee had recently started within the setting and were due to apply for reregistration the week of inspection. This met guidance of applying for registration within the three month period.

We were satisfied actions taken contributed to children's safety and protection from harm.

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

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Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

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

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