Windmill Nursery
Day Care of Children

Congregational Church
231 Brandon Street
Motherwell
ML1 1RS

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 June 2026

Service provided by:
None None

Service provider number:
SP2008009997

Service no:
CS2008183036

About the service

Windmill Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 44 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of these, no more than four children are aged under two years, no more than 10 are aged two to under three years, and no more than 30 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

The service is provided by Windmill Nursery and operates in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council to deliver funded early learning and childcare for eligible children aged two years and over. Funded sessions are provided between 09:00 and 15:00 during school term time, with additional hours available by agreement with the provider. The nursery operates from 08:00 to 18:00 throughout the year.

Care is provided within a church hall setting. During operating hours, children have exclusive use of secure areas within the premises. Babies are cared for in a designated area, while older children are accommodated in the main hall, which is organised into two distinct spaces to meet children's differing needs.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 and 24 June 2026 between the hours of 08:30 and 17:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 24 June 2026. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. There were up to 25 children in attendance over the days of inspection.

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,
- gathered feedback from 13 families through online questionnaires and in person,
- spoke with staff and management,
- observed practice and daily life,
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment, and
- reviewed documents.

As part of the inspection, core assurances were considered to ensure children are safe, the environment is well maintained, and the service is operating in line with legal requirements.

Key messages

- Leaders had established a clear vision and values which are well understood by staff and underpin practice.
- Positive relationships with children, families and staff supported a collaborative and inclusive culture.
- Leadership should strengthen oversight processes, including medication, accidents, incidents and risk assessments.
- Children benefitted from increasingly confident staff who support engagement, wellbeing and development.
- Children benefitted from a stimulating environment with increasing use of open-ended and natural resources.
- Improvements in practitioner interaction were beginning to positively impact children's engagement and curiosity.
- Parents were increasingly involved in consultation and service development.

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

QIs inspected: 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 which could benefit from improvement.

The service demonstrated a clear, well-communicated vision, with a strong emphasis on ambition, achievement and inclusive practice. Values of partnership, respect, empathy and collaboration were evident in leadership approaches and staff practice. Staff shared a clear understanding of expectations and were committed to providing high-quality experiences for children. Staff deployment supported warm, responsive interactions and a nurturing ethos, contributing to positive relationships and engagement. This was reflected in parent feedback, with comments such as "staff seem genuinely caring towards the children" and "staff are friendly and easy to approach with any issues or queries." As a result, children experienced a thoughtfully organised environment that promoted choice, independence and meaningful play, supporting their engagement and positive relationships.

Leaders prioritised strong relationships with children, families and staff, contributing to consistency and a positive team culture. Staff felt supported and contributed to service development. While there was a clear commitment to continuous improvement, evaluation processes were not yet fully embedded, with limited evidence of consistent links between actions and children's outcomes. Strengthening this would support more robust planning, leading to improved experiences and outcomes for children.

A structured and increasingly strategic approach to self-evaluation, improvement planning and quality assurance was in place. This was supported by a clear action plan and engagement with the council's quality team. Targeted professional learning was strengthening staff confidence, particularly in interactions, planning and use of the environment. As a result, children benefited from a skilled workforce which, supported children's engagement, independence and wellbeing.

Quality assurance systems, including learning walks, supervision and audit activity, were becoming more systematic. These approaches were beginning to support accountability, reflection and shared leadership. Staff contributed through champion roles, and stakeholders were involved in reviewing the setting's vision and priorities.

Leaders maintained continuity of care following disruption, including relocation, and prioritised children's wellbeing. This was evidenced through consistent routines and warm, responsive interactions. Parents recognised the commitment of leaders and staff during a period of change, highlighting "their hard work and determination in getting the new premises up and running at a high standard... keeping parents updated with progress." As a result, children felt secure, settled and confident within their environment.

Children's and families' views were increasingly gathered and used to inform improvement. Feedback from parents highlighted positive experiences, particularly regarding the environment, relationships and sense of community. Parents commented that "it is a lovely community to be a part of" and noted positive changes in their child's learning. This informed ongoing reflection and development. More consistent and formal approaches to consultation would strengthen evidence for improvement, supporting better outcomes for children and families.

Some gaps were identified in safeguarding, oversight and accountability. Evidence from records showed inconsistencies in medication documentation and limited analysis of accidents and incidents. Policies required updating to reflect national guidance. These gaps presented a potential risk to safe and consistent practice. Strengthening recording, auditing and oversight would ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing are protected. (see area for improvement 1).

Recruitment and workforce development were effective. Evidence from induction records, training and staff feedback demonstrated a well-supported workforce. Ongoing professional learning strengthened staff skills in supporting wellbeing and regulation. As a result, children benefited from confident, responsive staff, promoting nurturing and engaging experiences that supported wellbeing, engagement and development.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should further develop quality assurance processes to support continuous improvement for children and families. Leadership should strengthen recording, auditing and oversight to ensure consistency, accountability and safe data storage practice. This should include the review and monitoring of medication, accidents and incidents, risk assessments, and policies and procedures.

This will ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19). Strengthening current practice will support consistent, safe and accurate recording and storage of information, ensuring children's health, safety and wellbeing are protected.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

QIs inspected: Playing, learning and developing.

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.

Children were confident, engaged and actively led their own learning across indoor and outdoor environments. They demonstrated creativity, independence and problem-solving in a range of experiences. The environment supported choice and free-flow play, enabling children to move independently and follow their interests. Outdoor learning further enhanced experiences across age groups. As a result, children developed confidence, independence and a strong sense of ownership in their play. This was reflected in children's views, with one child sharing, "I love all my friends and the teachers are the best... they help me when I need it and... make me smile," highlighting positive relationships that support engagement in learning.

The environment was well resourced to promote curiosity and exploration, though further development would maximise learning opportunities. In the baby room, natural materials and treasure baskets supported sensory play and early investigation. Children developed communication, movement and emotional wellbeing. In the 2-3 and 3-5 rooms, loose parts promoted creativity, imagination and problem-solving. As a result, children were motivated to explore, develop their thinking and build confidence as capable learners.

Nurturing and respectful care was consistently evident. Staff responded sensitively to individual needs and promoted independence within a calm and inclusive environment. Parents highlighted the impact of this

approach, noting their child "has been allowed to be themself and develops at their own pace... understood and respected," reflecting a strong ethos of inclusive, child-centred practice. Children experienced strong emotional wellbeing and developed secure relationships. As a result, they felt safe, valued and confident to engage in their play and learning.

Improving the quality of interactions was a clear priority. Staff engaged in training, peer support and role modelling to strengthen practice. There was an increasing focus on engaging with children, offering explanations and extending ideas. As a result, children were beginning to benefit from more responsive interactions that support curiosity and learning.

Children were highly engaged in creative, investigative and construction play. Floor books showed that children were motivated by their own ideas and revisited experiences. Examples included developing playdough recipes, exploring painting and constructing models. Children collaborated, shared ideas and solved problems together. This supported communication, cooperation and early enquiry skills.

Planning and assessment were largely child-centred. Practitioners responded to children's interests and captured their voices through floor books. There was emerging alignment with Curriculum for Excellence. However, recording sometimes focused on description rather than identifying learning and next steps. This at times limited some opportunities to fully extend learning. Further development in analysing learning would strengthen progression and learning outcomes.

Learning was supported through ongoing observations. Staff used these to inform the environment and plan experiences based on children's interests. Practitioners adopted a facilitative role, supporting and extending learning. Planned experiences offered opportunities for small group collaboration. Skilled interactions and appropriate challenge supported children to deepen their thinking. As a result, children were engaged and motivated in their learning.

Staff tracked children's progress monthly using a traffic light system approach. This supported identification of strengths and gaps in learning. Evaluations informed support strategies and staff development. Weekly planning meetings provided opportunities to review learning, share information and plan next steps. Staff demonstrated ownership and accountability in taking forward actions to support children's overall learning and development.

Parents spoke positively about the environment and communication. They described the setting as welcoming, organised and supportive. One parent noted, "I am really happy... and have noticed really positive changes in my child's learning this year," reinforcing the impact of the learning environment and staff practice. A range of communication methods kept parents informed about learning and progress. Strong relationships enabled open discussion of children's needs. As a result, children benefited from supportive partnerships, promoting wellbeing, inclusion and engagement in learning.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

QIs inspected: 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.

Children's emotional wellbeing was supported through warm, responsive interactions. Practitioners greeted children by name, made eye contact and showed genuine interest. These interactions helped children feel

recognised, valued and secure. Parents were welcomed at drop off and collection, with regular verbal handovers. Feedback reflected this, with one parent sharing that staff "provide a very caring, welcoming environment for kids and families," and others describing staff as "friendly and easy to approach." As a result, children were happy, settled and enjoyed their nursery experience.

Care routines were flexible and adapted to meet individual needs. In the baby room, clear displays outlined sleep routines and comfort preferences, supported by photographs and descriptions to promote consistency. Staff used this information effectively to recognise cues and respond sensitively. This supported children's emotional security and physical wellbeing. Minor improvements to language clarity and inclusion of safe sleep guidance would strengthen practice further.

Children's privacy and dignity were consistently upheld. Staff supported children sensitively during personal care and encouraged increasing independence. Children were offered reassurance alongside choice and control in seeking help. This promoted autonomy within a safe and nurturing environment. As a result, children developed confidence, independence and a positive sense of wellbeing.

Mealtimes were calm and organised, supporting a relaxed and positive experience. Children were encouraged to serve themselves and manage their own plates, promoting independence and self-care. Staff provided praise and followed appropriate hygiene practices. However, reduced staffing limited opportunities to sit alongside children. This impacted role modelling and reduced opportunities to extend conversation. As a result, support for language development and social interaction was sometimes limited.

Transitions were managed effectively to support wellbeing. Flexible settling arrangements helped new children feel secure and build trust. Staff worked closely with families to share information and establish routines. Transitions between rooms were planned and implemented consistently. As a result, children felt safe, respected and more confident in managing change.

Personal planning had improved and more clearly reflected children's needs. Plans included care strategies and next steps. Staff demonstrated good knowledge of children and used this to inform consistent practice. Leaders recognised the need to strengthen evaluation of strategies and introduced systems to support this. Staff understood the importance of working with parents when reviewing plans. Further collaborative evaluation would strengthen impact and outcomes.

Relationships with families were strong, respectful and positive. Parents felt welcomed and comfortable engaging with staff. Feedback highlighted the caring ethos, with one parent commenting on "the kindness and caring nature of all the staff," and the interest they take in children's achievements beyond the setting. Previous family learning opportunities supported partnership working and confidence building. Reintroducing these would further strengthen engagement and support learning at home.

Parents were increasingly involved in the life of the service. They contributed to surveys and consultations, including reviewing values. This is strengthening partnership working and shared understanding. There remains scope to further develop meaningful involvement in decision making. Strengthening this will enhance outcomes for children.

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 health, wellbeing, and safety, each child should have a personal plan in place that clearly shows children's care and learning needs.

This should include but not be limited to:
- initial story to gathering information 'what matters to the child';
- identify key needs which include heath, welfare, and learning needs;
- strategies to support identified needs; and
- a review and reflection on children's progress, and a plan for what's next.

This is to ensure the quality of care is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states: '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 14 May 2025.

Action taken since then

Leaders have strengthened personal planning through targeted training and improved processes, resulting in plans that more clearly reflect children's individual care and learning needs, including identified needs, support strategies and next steps. Staff have engaged with relevant guidance and improved transitions and documentation, supporting greater consistency in practice. Staff have also recognised the importance of working in partnership with parents to review and evaluate strategies, ensuring plans remain responsive.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's wellbeing, learning, and development, the provider should ensure the children have access to a high-quality environment that is well designed. This should include, but not be limited to, children having access to a well designed outdoor space that is suitably furnished and has appropriate safety measures in place.

This is to ensure the quality of the environment is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states; that as a child, the premises should be adapted, equipped and furnished to meet children's needs and wishes (HSCS 5.16) and 'I can use an appropriate mix of private and communal areas, including accessible outdoor space, because the premises have been designed or adapted for high quality care and support' (HSCS 5.1).

This area for improvement was made on 14 May 2025.

Action taken since then

Following an audit, professional discussion and relocation to new premises, leaders and staff have adapted the environment to ensure children have consistent access to a well-designed outdoor space that meets their needs and supports their safety. The move to the new premises has enabled a more effective and purposeful use of space, including prioritising daily access to the main outdoor environment in line with high-quality practice.

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	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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