Morningside Children's Nursery Ltd
Day Care of Children

1a Nile Grove
Edinburgh
EH10 4RE

Telephone: 01316 292 770

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 October 2026

Service provided by:
Morningside Children's Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2010011231

Service no:
CS2010274726

About the service

Morningside Children's Nursery Ltd is in Edinburgh. They are registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 55 children at any one time from three months to an age not yet attending primary school, with a maximum of 30 children under two years.

Children have access to three playrooms designated for their age, enclosed garden and personal care facilities. The service is close to local amenities and can be reached by public transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 October 2026 between 09:00 and 17:00. This 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. At the time of inspection 40 children were registered.

To inform our evaluation we:
- spoke to and spent time with 21 children using the service and nine families
- received 18 completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with staff and the management team
- 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, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

• Children were valued, respected and included within a service that promoted a culture of nurture and care.
• Children benefited from rich, responsive play experiences that supported choice, curiosity and creativity.
• Children benefited from warm, skilled and responsive interactions that were paced to support their stage of development.
• Children experienced kind, sensitive and individualised care that ensured their privacy and dignity was respected.
• Children benefited from secure relationships with a stable, skilled staff team who knew them well and supported their individual needs.
• Children and families were regularly consulted with their views respected and used to influence change.
• Children experienced high-quality care and learning as effective leadership, self-evaluation and quality assurance resulted in meaningful and sustained improvements.
• Children and families benefited from a staff team who were committed to ongoing learning and development to deliver high-quality care, play and learning.
• Outdoor learning opportunities could be further developed to ensure children experience a wider breadth of learning and engagement with the local community.

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

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

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service had clear values based on nurture, respect, inclusion, play and partnership working, which were well embedded in practice. Staff and families had been meaningfully involved in reviewing the vision, values and aims, with changes made to reflect the service's continued development and high aspirations. This ensured views were valued and influenced ongoing developments. Warm, nurturing and respectful interactions demonstrated staff's strong understanding of these shared values. As a result, children experienced high-quality care where they were valued, respected and included.

A positive and supportive culture had been established by all staff that promoted connections and inclusion in the life of the service. There was a clear commitment to staff's professional development and wellbeing, with effective systems supporting regular appraisals. As a result, children and families benefited from a committed staff team.

Children, families and staff were meaningfully involved in improvements. Nearly all families told us that they were regularly asked for their views, both formally and informally, and felt listened to and included. Comments included, "through parent surveys, parent committee, feedback is often sought as the nursery manager is so keen to ensure that parents are happy and involved", "I know I have opportunity to offer feedback to improve the service" and "Parental views and contributions are welcomed." The leadership team used feedback alongside observations and staff reflections to identify priorities, develop the service and consider the impact of changes. This approach positively influenced children's experiences.

Improvement priorities included transitions, staff-child interactions and ensuring children's progress. These were regularly reviewed to measure the impact on outcomes for children. The pace of change was managed effectively, ensuring improvements were embedded and sustained in everyday practice. Staff confidently explained how changes had improved experiences. This demonstrated improvements were meaningful and having a positive impact. For example, families told us about the transition plan, they valued the flexible and responsive arrangements that reflected their child's individual needs and preferences. As a result, children experienced well-planned and responsive improvements that supported continuity in their care, learning and development.

Quality assurance processes were established and effective. These included observations of practice and audits, with staff receiving constructive feedback to support their development. There was clear evidence that identified actions had been followed up to evaluate progress and assess impact. This ensured an effective cycle of quality assurance that supported consistency across the service. As a result, self-evaluation and quality assurance supported sustained improvements.

Children benefited from a stable, skilled and experienced staff team that had been retained over time. Families valued the continuity this provided and recognised that, although some staffing changes had occurred, a consistent core team had been maintained. Comments included "Staff are consistent, welcoming and know my child well. They are friendly, kind and supportive", "I know the staff by name, they are all very welcoming, positive and happy to help", "We are always given notice when a new member of staff is brought in" and "Nursery setting is fairly small and intimate with a very low staff turnover, meaning staff get to know the child, their siblings and entire family very well which is lovely." This helped children and families develop trusting relationships with staff.

Recruitment and induction processes were well organised and supported a skilled and confident staff team. Safer recruitment procedures were followed, with children appropriately involved in aspects of recruitment. This ensured their views were considered about staff who would care for them. New staff benefited from a structured induction programme, mentoring and support tailored to their individual learning needs. They made very good use of best practice guidance with meaningful reflections, helping them develop their practice. As a result, children were supported by staff who had been safely recruited and their practice influenced by national guidance.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children were highly engaged, motivated and confident in their play and learning. The environment was safe and had been carefully considered to reflect stages of development and interests. Families told us, "Staff are vigilant and I know my child feels safe and secure at nursery", "Very secure and intimate setting with friendly staff" and "As far as we are aware, the nursery setting is safe, secure and well-maintained."

Rich and engaging provocations provided a wide range of opportunities for exploration, investigation and creativity. Resources were plentiful, well organised and easily accessible. This enabled children to make independent choices and follow their ideas. As a result, children developed their imagination, problem-solving skills and learning through their senses.

Children had access to a small garden area throughout the day. They used this space to connect with nature, develop gross and fine motor skills and lead their interests. For example, children enjoyed making 'soup' from leaves and stones and experimented with items that 'float and sink'. Staff supported these interests very well, using the interactions to encourage children to estimate and problem solve. As a result, children's level of engagement was sustained. Some families identified they would like children to have more opportunities in the wider community. The service recognised this and had considered how to improve outdoor experiences.

Staff had leadership roles in areas such as literacy, numeracy, outdoors and loose parts play. Their leadership focus and ongoing reflections of these areas contributed to rich, inviting and responsive environments where children were highly engaged for extended periods. Staff confidently evaluated the impact of their roles to identify what was working well and where further development was needed. Children developed leadership skills through meaningful roles that enabled them to contribute to and influence their experiences. As a result, both staff and children were empowered to lead improvements.

Interactions were positive and a significant strength across the service. Staff were skilled at observing children and interpreting play. They responded sensitively to children's cues and supported learning. Children were confident to lead their play while benefiting from well-timed support to extend their thinking and learning.

Staff were at children's level and engaged in their experiences. Throughout the inspection, we observed warm and purposeful conversations. Effective questioning encouraged children to think, explore ideas and develop their understanding. Staff gave children appropriate time to process information and communicate their wishes. This created an unhurried and respectful approach to learning, where children's voices were heard and valued.

Positive interactions and meaningful conversations were effective in promoting language and communication. Staff sensitively modelled language, repeated and extended children's words and ensured they understood what younger children were communicating. This helped children develop confidence in expressing themselves and supported communication at a pace appropriate to their stage of development.

The positive impact of the service's ongoing improvement work around staff-child interactions were clearly evident in practice across the team. Staff confidently demonstrated learning from professional development that enriched children's experiences. As a result, children benefited from high-quality interactions that supported their curiosity, communication and thinking.

Planning approaches were responsive and influenced by children's interests and individual next steps. Staff used a balance of observation, responsive planning and intentional experiences. This ensured children were able to follow their interests whilst experiencing a broad range of meaningful learning opportunities. Staff evaluated experiences as part of the planning cycle and used this information to track children's progress. This supported continuity and progression in learning.

The service shared children's learning with families through an online platform. Observations recorded children's experiences and the skills they were developing. The service recognised, through consultation with families, that the frequency of observations could be further strengthened. Families told us, "The daily updates let me know the children are routinely offered songs, stories and games to support their learning", "Each day I am updated with daily activities such as toileting, sleeping, eating as well as photographs which I always look forward to" and "The nursery is a lovely safe place to play and my [child] is always happy to be there playing." Alongside sharing of learning online, consultations with families took place where children's progress and next steps were discussed and agreed in partnership with families. This influenced the learning environment, planned activities and individual experiences.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children and families benefited from a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment that supported wellbeing through nurturing and caring relationships. Staff knew children well and responded sensitively to their individual needs. Children who needed reassurance or comfort were nurtured, helping them to feel safe, secure and valued. Families spoke positively about the caring relationships staff had developed with children and the support they provided to families. Comments included "Friendly staff who are always helpful and caring towards my child", "The staff are welcoming, forthcoming and honest. They listen to our needs and the needs of children and respect any requests that we may have", "They not only work hard to create warm and positive relationships with the children but they do very well to build trust with us and create an open and positive relationship" and "'Staff are lovely and take time to ask questions and find out if they need to know anything about the child."

Children's rights, choices and dignity were respected. Staff regularly checked in with children, listened carefully and responded appropriately to their verbal and non-verbal communication. For example, when a younger child indicated their preference to use their comforter, this was respected. This responsive approach helped children feel listened to and supported their emotional wellbeing. Personal care routines were managed sensitively and respectfully, taking account of children's individual needs and protecting their privacy and dignity.

Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried and a sociable experience. Staff sat with children and used this time to engage them in meaningful conversations about their interests, experiences and food preferences. Children developed independence in selecting some foods and pouring drinks. Leadership responsibilities enabled children to contribute to preparing the mealtime area. We encouraged the service to extend the opportunities for independence at lunchtime to reflect the positive practice observed at snack time. This would further support children to develop confidence, responsibility and self-help skills.

Children's healthcare needs were managed effectively. Staff were knowledgeable about individual dietary and medication requirements and knew how to access important information when needed. Medication was reviewed with families and checked regularly by staff. Families commented "The nursery staff all seem to really care about the children, their wellbeing and safety" and I am "confident [my] opinions [are] valued and used to plan [my] child's care.' This meant families had confidence in staff to safely meet children's healthcare needs.

Children's emotional wellbeing was very well supported through responsive routines that reflected their individual needs. Staff were calm and nurturing in their approach and demonstrated an understanding of safer sleep practice. They used appropriate resources to support children's safety. For example, Individual blankets and comforters were available where needed to promote emotional security and were stored appropriately, taking account of infection prevention and control practice.

Personal plans were in place and were individualised and meaningful. These contributed positively to children's wellbeing, learning and development. Plans were regularly reviewed in partnership with families and, where appropriate, children. Families' knowledge of their child was valued and used effectively to influence support. This provided greater consistency for the child and supported communication and participation. As a result, children made progress at a pace that was right for them.

Relationships with families were a significant strength of the service. Families and children had developed trusting and respectful connections with staff who demonstrated a genuine interest in each child's wider life and experiences. Staff took time during drop offs and pickups to speak with families and share meaningful information about their child's day. Families said "I think it's an incredibly warm, welcoming and caring place. The children seem to really enjoy going and thrive at nursery", "Staff are very welcoming when we arrive at the door in the morning. They clearly know my child well and consistently greet [them] warmly upon arrival. [They have] built strong bonds with those who work within the environment and look forward to seeing them" and "staff make every effort to make my child feel settled specifically at drop offs." This reassured families that positive connections had been made between children and staff.

Families spoke very positively about communication. They felt well informed and told us that staff were approachable and responsive. A range of communication methods, including newsletters, Learning Journals, family forum and informal conversations, helped families remain connected with their child's experiences and wider developments within the service. The Family Forum provided opportunities for families to develop connections with each other, the service and their wider community. Comments included "We are given opportunities to get involved with the newsletter and parent council. This is flagged regularly in the newsletter which has enabled us to make links with other parents too" and "I am part of the parents committee, and everyone is invited to join this if they wish." This created a sense of belonging in the learning community.

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

0345 600 9527

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