Preschool Academy
Day Care of Children

3 School Street
Coatbridge
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Telephone: 01236 897 760

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 September 2026

Service provided by:
Preschool Academy (Scotland) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2015012437

Service no:
CS2014332769

About the service

Preschool Academy is a day care of children service provided by Preschool Academy (Scotland) Ltd and is located in the Coatbridge area of North Lanarkshire.

The service is delivered in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council and are registered to provide care for up to 59 children from birth to not yet attending primary school. During the inspection, 61 children were registered with the service.

The service is close to shops, transport routes and other amenities. Care is provided from dedicated playrooms for the different age groups. Children also have access to enclosed outdoor spaces.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 and 16 June 2026, between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00. Feedback was delivered to the service on 17 June. 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, 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
- reviewed feedback from 14 families
- spoke with the manager
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with staff throughout the inspection and reviewed electronic feedback
- 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. These are discussed within leadership and management of staff and resources.

Key messages

- Children were settled, engaged and able to make choices about their play and learning.
- Staff had developed warm relationships with children and supported their day-to-day wellbeing.
- Children's interests and ideas were reflected in some aspects of planning and play experiences.
- Opportunities to extend children's thinking and learning through interactions were sometimes missed.
- Planning and assessment approaches did not always clearly demonstrate children's progress over time.
- Quality assurance arrangements needed to be strengthened to support continuous improvement.
- Child protection processes required improvement to better safeguard children.
- Safer recruitment and workforce monitoring arrangements required improvement to ensure children were safeguarded effectively.

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	2 - Weak
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

Leadership 2 - Weak

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We made an evaluation of weak for this quality indicator, as there were some strengths but these were compromised by important weaknesses.

The service had experienced significant changes to its management structure since the last inspection. Leaders had worked to establish systems to support quality assurance, staff development and safe practice. However, these arrangements were not yet fully embedded across the service, resulting in inconsistencies in oversight and monitoring. As a result, children did not consistently experience the benefits of a well-managed service focused on continuous improvement.

The service had developed a vision and values statement intended to support positive outcomes for children. These were not yet fully embedded across the service. Not all staff were able to describe how the vision, values and aims influenced their practice. Opportunities for children, families and staff to contribute to the development and review of the vision and values were limited. The manager should strengthen approaches to ensure the vision and values are understood, shared and reflected across the service. As a result, children did not always benefit from a shared approach to care and support.

The service had introduced systems to support quality assurance and safe practice, including audits, observations and monitoring activities. These had not always identified areas requiring improvement. Medication records contained inaccuracies and omissions, and medication was not always stored in line with guidance. Monitoring processes had also not highlighted concerns relating to the condition, cleanliness and maintenance of children's care environments. This included the absence of hot water within a changing area, which was addressed during the inspection. Staff had identified the need for improvements to the outdoor environment, but evidence of progress against previously identified actions was limited.

Staff feedback also suggested that opportunities to contribute to self-evaluation and improvement activity were variable. Leaders should strengthen monitoring and quality assurance arrangements to ensure areas for development are identified promptly and improvements are progressed. This would help ensure children benefit from improvements that enhanced their experiences, wellbeing and development.

(See area for improvement 1).

The service had processes in place to support recruitment, induction and staff development. We found that there continued to be gaps regarding pre-employment checks, despite this being identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection. This will now be escalated to a requirement.

(See requirement 1).

Management had also not identified inaccuracies within workforce records through their own monitoring processes, including professional registration information. The provider should strengthen oversight arrangements to ensure recruitment and registration procedures are applied consistently and in line with legislation and guidance. This would help ensure children were protected by robust recruitment arrangements.

(See requirement 2).

Child protection arrangements were not sufficiently robust to ensure concerns were recorded, monitored and progressed effectively. Staff understanding of safeguarding reporting arrangements was not always clear and child protection training had expired for most staff. Chronologies were incomplete and records contained limited detail about concerns raised by other agencies, actions taken and outcomes for children. Records were not organised in a way that enabled concerns, actions and outcomes to be easily tracked over time. Management monitoring processes had not identified these issues. The service must strengthen safeguarding recording and monitoring arrangements, including the development of clear chronologies and organised records. Improving this area would help demonstrate that child protection concerns were consistently monitored and progressed in a way that promoted children's safety and wellbeing.

(See requirement 3).

Requirements

1.
By 30 November 2026, the provider must ensure all staff currently employed to provide care for children are fit and suitable to undertake their role.

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

- verify that appropriate recruitment information is held for all current employees
- ensure references provide sufficient assurance of suitability to work with children
- confirm that all staff hold and maintain the appropriate professional registration for their role
- maintain accurate and up-to-date workforce records.

This is to comply with Regulation 9 (Fitness of employees) and Regulation 13 (Protection of vulnerable groups) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "4.24 I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited." (HSCS 3.20).

2.
By 31 October 2026, the provider must develop and establish effective systems to implement and monitor safer recruitment and workforce information.

These systems must, as a minimum:

- ensure all recruitment checks are completed and appropriately scrutinised before employment commences
- maintain clear and accurate records demonstrating that recruitment checks have been completed
- implement regular management oversight of recruitment and registration records
- ensure quality assurance processes identify and address gaps in workforce records and recruitment arrangements

This is to comply with Regulation 9 (Fitness of employees) and Regulation 13 (Protection of vulnerable groups) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "4.24 I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited." (HSCS 3.20).

3. By 30 October 2026, the provider must ensure child protection arrangements are effective and support the timely identification, recording, monitoring and progression of concerns about children's safety and wellbeing.

To do this, the provider must at a minimum:

- ensure staff understand reporting procedures and know how to respond to child protection concerns
- maintain clear, accurate and organised child protection records
- develop and maintain chronologies where concerns have been identified
- record concerns, actions taken, decisions made and outcomes for children
- ensure records enable concerns to be tracked and monitored over time
- implement effective management oversight to monitor safeguarding practice and records.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities (HSCS 3.20).

Areas for improvement

1. To support the continuous improvement of the service, the provider should strengthen leadership and quality assurance arrangements to support effective self-evaluation, identify areas for development and drive continuous improvement

This should include, but is not limited to, developing clear improvement priorities, strengthening quality assurance processes and ensuring staff, children and families contribute meaningfully to self-evaluation and improvement activities.

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

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Children play and learn 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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

Children's experiences reflected some of their interests and preferences. They made choices about their play and were able to direct some aspects of their learning. More opportunities to extend children's experiences and deepen engagement would benefit children's play and learning. The systems in place to assess and record children's learning and development needed to be more focussed on learning, outcomes and next steps for children, rather than the experience. This would help staff identify, plan and assess children's learning more effectively.

(See area for improvement 1).

Children benefited from warm and nurturing relationships with staff. They confidently approached staff for support, reassurance and conversation throughout the day. Staff knew children well and responded sensitively to their individual needs and routines. Parents valued the caring relationships staff had developed with their children. One parent told us, "I have a great relationship with all the staff in the nursery and if I have any questions they are able to answer with no problems." As a result, children experienced positive relationships which supported their wellbeing and sense of belonging.

The service had established approaches to sharing information and communicating with families. Parents described varied experiences of communication and involvement. While some felt informed and valued opportunities to contribute, others wanted more regular communication and greater involvement in discussions about their child. The service should continue to strengthen communication and partnership working with families. This would help ensure children's care, wellbeing and development are informed by a shared understanding between families and staff.

Staff supported children during play and responded appropriately to their individual needs. They encouraged participation and engagement through praise and encouragement. However, interactions were not always used to extend learning or build on children's ideas to support sustained thinking. Improving these interactions would further support children's learning and development.

Staff used their knowledge of children's interests to help shape experiences. Staff spoke confidently about children's strengths, interests and emerging needs and could describe how some experiences had developed from children's interests. However, opportunities for children and families to contribute to planning were not always clearly evidenced. The service should strengthen approaches to partnership working to ensure families are more meaningfully involved in planning for children's learning.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's learning experiences reflect their needs and preferences, the provider should strengthen planning and assessment approaches. This will help ensure observations, assessments and next steps inform children's future learning. This could help staff to better demonstrate children's progress over time and ensure learning experiences build on children's interests, strengths and developmental needs.

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

'I can maintain and develop my interests, activities and what matters to me in the way that I like.' (HSCS 2.22).

Children are supported to achieve — 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

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

Staff showed some understanding of children's individual wellbeing needs and the support they required. They could describe the approaches used to support children and their families and spoke confidently about individual children. However, practice did not always reflect this understanding. We identified examples where children's needs, preferences and routines had not been fully considered within care arrangements. For example, arrangements relating to dietary requirements did not consistently reflect children's identified needs. We also found examples where sleep arrangements did not align with current guidance and best practice. These arrangements did not fully support children's comfort, wellbeing and sense of belonging. As a result, children did not always experience care and support that was fully responsive to their individual circumstances. The service should strengthen oversight of care practices and ensure staff knowledge reflects current guidance and best practice, including safe sleep arrangements.

(See area for improvement 1).

Personal plans contained information about children's care, wellbeing and support needs. Staff were able to discuss the information recorded and explain how this informed day-to-day practice. However, records were not always fully completed or reviewed. For example, some plans were missing parent signatures and review dates. As a result, records did not always show how support changed over time. The service should strengthen personal planning arrangements to help ensure plans remain current, meaningful and are regularly reviewed.

The service had established opportunities to gather the views of families. Families were able to share feedback and information through a range of communication methods. However, it was not always clear how feedback from families was analysed, evaluated or used to inform service development. The service should demonstrate how feedback from families informs service improvement and development. This would mean that opportunities to improve outcomes for children were informed by the views and experiences of families.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children experience care and support that is safe, responsive and tailored to their individual circumstances, the provider should strengthen oversight of care practices and staff knowledge.

This should include, but is not limited to, providing staff with access to appropriate training and professional learning opportunities, including safe sleep training, and ensuring learning is embedded within day-to-day practice.

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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

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

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 ensure children's safety, the provider should ensure that staff are safely recruited. To do this they should, at a minimum, ensure that appropriate PVG checks are in place for all staff.

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

"I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (HSCS 4.23).

This area for improvement was made on 22 August 2025.

Action taken since then

No sufficient progress had been made in relation to this area for improvement. A review of recruitment records identified gaps in safer recruitment arrangements. Records did not consistently demonstrate that all required pre-employment checks had been completed before staff commenced their role. In addition, not all members of staff were registered with the appropriate governing body. These findings indicate that recruitment oversight was not sufficiently effective.

As a result, this area for improvement has been escalated to a requirement.

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	2 - Weak
Leadership and management of staff and resources	2 - Weak

Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Playing, learning and developing	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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