Cart Mill Family Centre
Day Care of Children

Newford Grove
Clarkston
Glasgow
G76 8QZ

Telephone: 0141 570 7560

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 September 2026

Service provided by:
East Renfrewshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003372

Service no:
CS2015338505

About the service

Cart Mill Family Centre is a day care of children service located in the Clarkston area of East Renfrewshire. The service is provided by East Renfrewshire Council and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 110 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school of whom; no more than 20 are aged two years to under three years. At the time of inspection there were a total of 29 children present.

The service operates from a purpose built single story building. Children have access to spacious playrooms and secure outdoor play areas. There is changing and toilet facilities for children and office, catering and staff facilities. The service is close to schools, transport routes and shops.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 and 22 September 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 and families using the service
- reviewed feedback from eight parents and carers whose children attend the service
- 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 a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children were nurtured, deeply engaged in quality experiences and having fun.
- Staff knew children well and responded to their individual needs with kindness and respect.
- Children played in a calm welcoming space that encouraged their creativity and imagination.
- Staff integrated literacy, numeracy and language naturally throughout daily routines and play experiences.
- Children of all ages had daily opportunities to access quality outdoor play experiences.
- Opportunities for family engagement were encouraged, strengthening partnerships and supporting children's learning and wellbeing.
- Quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning were meaningful and 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	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

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

Leaders and staff created a strong sense of community across the nursery and worked closely together to support children's development and wellbeing. They shared a clear vision that focused on continuous improvement and achieving positive outcomes for all children. Leaders recently engaged parents and children in developing the nursery's vision, values, and aims. Parents and children voted for three words that mattered most to them and selected happy, safe, and loved. Staff consistently embedded these values in their practice. As a result, children experienced nurturing, secure, and positive environments where they felt valued, supported, and able to thrive.

Leaders understood the importance of using staff feedback to help plan and develop the service. They used effective communication methods to gather views and share progress on improvement priorities. These included quality conversations and team meetings. Staff felt confident identifying areas for improvement, and leaders encouraged them to trial new approaches. For example, staff reviewed how they recorded children's learning. They recognised having a floor book in each area, rather than one per room, would better capture children's experiences and progress. This strengthened reflective practice, increased staff involvement in improvement work, and helped drive continuous improvement across the service.

Families actively contributed to service improvement and development. Staff gathered their views through information sharing and daily discussions and used this feedback to shape improvement priorities. One family told us, "The nursery are always looking for suggestions and feedback but also provide activities for parents to be involved in with our child." This informed improvement planning and helped ensure it reflected the needs of the service and its families.

Effective quality assurance systems were in place and leaders used them well. They regularly monitored and audited practice, including reviewing learning journals and personal plans. Staff told us monitoring supported their practice and ensured information focused on children's development. To further strengthen auditing processes, leaders should ensure parents consistently date accident records when signing them and that medication forms match children's healthcare plans. They should also ensure staff registration records remain current. This would enhance the accuracy of records and support effective oversight of key aspects of children's care and wellbeing.

Staff took on a range of leadership responsibilities and played an active role in developing the service. They spoke enthusiastically about their roles and described how these helped them improve outcomes for children. We saw positive examples of this in practice. For example, staff promoted children's rights throughout the nursery and in their work with families. They embedded programmes to support language and social and emotional development and provided opportunities for children to attend forest school. As a result, children benefited from a wider range of meaningful experiences and opportunities to develop their skills and interests.

Leaders implemented effective induction and appraisal processes that supported staff learning and development. They had high aspirations for the service, modelled good practice and supported staff through approachable leadership, mentoring and regular reflective discussions. Staff completed relevant training, including Up, Up and Away, Think Equal, child protection and paediatric first aid. This resulted in a consistent approach to practice and improved staff confidence, supporting positive outcomes for children's wellbeing and development.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning, and developing

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.

Interactions were consistently warm, nurturing and responsive. Staff engaged children in meaningful conversations and used open-ended questions, such as "What can we do about that?" and "What can you see?", to encourage thinking, problem-solving and language development. As a result, children remained engaged in their learning for sustained periods, confidently shared their ideas and developed their communication and critical-thinking skills.

Children experienced meaningful learning as staff responded well to their ideas and interests. They adapted resources and experiences to extend play, such as providing water and guttering to support children's interest in sharks and whales, creating a stage for imaginative play and encouraged colour mixing during creative activities. Staff also provided a range of loose parts materials indoors and outdoors. This included stones, sticks, buttons, crates and tyres, which encouraged open-ended exploration. As a result, children developed confidence, independence and creativity as they led their own learning.

Staff embedded literacy, numeracy and language throughout children's daily experiences. They read stories indoors and outdoors, encouraged singing and engaged children in rich conversations that developed language skills. Staff introduced mathematical language through play and daily routines, including baking, block play and outdoor activities. Children regularly used mark-making materials and saw their work valued and displayed throughout the setting. Staff tracked children's learning across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Management monitored progress and identified any gaps in learning. Staff used this information to plan targeted experiences and small-group activities that reflected children's interests and needs. As a result, children developed key literacy and numeracy skills through a range of meaningful contexts.

Children actively engaged in challenging and enjoyable outdoor play experiences. They assessed risks as they jumped from crates and practised landing safely on two feet. They explored rolling tyres, helping to develop confidence, coordination and physical skills. Staff created a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere encouraging children to participate, persevere and celebrate their achievements during games such as hopscotch. As a result, children experienced fun through play while developing their physical skills, confidence and resilience. One parent told us "I really like that the nursery has an outdoor area open to the children all day. They can choose when they would like to play outside."

Staff supported children to develop respect for and understanding of the natural world. Planters contained flowers, herbs and vegetables the children had grown. When children found a spider outdoors, staff supported them to move it safely to the bug hotel. Children confidently talked about other creatures they had seen, including a slug in the vegetable patch. As a result, children showed an interest in the natural world and developed an understanding of how to care for living things through first-hand experiences.

The nursery promoted a strong sense of community. Management hosted Information sessions for the parent employment team and citizen advice bureau, helping families access advice, guidance and support. Children visited the local nursing home sharing items grown in the garden and joined in litter picks with the local primary school. These experiences helped children become responsible, caring and active members of their community.

Children were at the centre of planning. Staff used mind maps to gather children's interests and tracked how these developed in floor books. For example, they linked children's interest in healthy eating to harvesting carrots from the garden. Children used an iPad to find a carrot muffin recipe and helped make the muffins for snack. Staff recorded individual children's learning and progress in learning journals using photographs and children's own comments. This ensured learning was relevant, meaningful and responsive to children's interests, supporting high levels of engagement. Staff and management recognised the need to track individual children's progress clearer and had already identified this as a priority within the service improvement plan.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing, care and support

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.

Staff worked effectively as a team and had fostered warm, positive relationships with children, each other, and families. Their nurturing and inclusive approaches created a supportive environment where everyone worked collaboratively to benefit the children.

Staff promoted children's rights throughout the day. They sensitively intervened when children needed support to take turns and share. They chatted with children, acknowledged how they were feeling and offered alternative resources. We observed staff carefully preserve a painting that a child was proud of and acknowledged how much the child's family would value it. Another staff member kept a child's creation safe while they had snack. This demonstrated respect for children and supported their confidence and wellbeing.

Children's achievements were recognised and celebrated through both informal and structured communication with families. Daily discussions at drop-off and collection times highlighted children's successes, while a "Shining Stars" notice board celebrated the accomplishments of children, staff and families. This helped children feel proud of their achievements and strengthened relationships with families.

Children experienced positive, well organised mealtimes that supported their independence, wellbeing and social development. During lunchtime, children demonstrated good hygiene practices by washing their hands and independently served themselves food and drinks. Lunches were nutritious and met children's dietary needs. Menus shared with parents helped children make choices, and alternative options were available. Staff sat alongside children, engaging in relaxed conversation and supporting positive social interaction. As a result, children enjoyed a calm, social mealtime experience that contributed positively to their sense of wellbeing and belonging.

Staff respected children's privacy and dignity during sleep and personal care routines. They supported children with personal care routines in a warm and nurturing manner, using calm conversation to help them feel relaxed and at ease. Sleep routines were tailored to meet individual needs, ensuring that each child received appropriate rest. This respectful approach ensured that children felt valued, relaxed and comfortable.

Staff were committed to keeping children safe. They used supportive language encouraging children to assess and respond to risks within their environment. For example, when jumping from the crates, balancing on the obstacle course and sliding down the chute. Children were knowledgeable of the Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act (SIMOA) approach and used a child friendly daily risk assessment in the outdoor area. Adult risk assessments included clear control measures and were used effectively. This all contributed to a safe environment for children.

Personal planning supported children's wellbeing and individual needs. Staff completed personal plans and "Being Me" records with families before children started and captured key information linked to wellbeing indicators. They used this information to plan strategies and experiences that met children's needs with clear links between wellbeing plans, learning journals and daily practice. Leaders recognised that recording of next steps and review dates could be clearer and had identified this within their improvement plans. As a result, children received consistent support that promoted their wellbeing and progress.

Children and families were at the heart of the service. Home visits prior to children starting played a significant role in building early relationships and easing transitions. Staff took time to get to know children and their families well. Parents were welcomed into the playroom as soon as they entered the building. Connections were further strengthened through meaningful family engagement opportunities such as, stay and play sessions, come dine with me and coffee catch ups. This supported parents to feel valued and contributed to trusting relationships between them and staff. All parents spoke positively about staff. Some comments included:

"There is always a friendly face at the door to welcome you in the morning and in the evenings during pick up. All staff greet my child by name which is reassuring and comforting. Even if it's not my child's key worker handing over, there is always a member of staff to tell me about their day and answer any questions we have. The communication is excellent."

"It's a lovely staff team who seem really happy to work in Cart Mill. Nothing is too much and they really got to know my family quickly."

"Cart Mill is an amazing place for your child to learn and grow."

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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.scot

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.