Burnside House Nursery
Day Care of Children

24 Kilwinning Road
Irvine
KA12 8RU

Telephone: 01294 313 180

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 July 2026

Service provided by:
Childcare Scotland Properties Limited

Service provider number:
SP2019013266

Service no:
CS2019373510

About the service

Burnside House Nursery provides a daycare of children service to a maximum of 140 children at any one time. Of those 140 no more than 33 are aged under 2 and no more than 36 are of an age to attend primary school.

Adult: child ratios will be a minimum of:
- Under 2 years - 1:3
- 2 years to under 3 years - 1:5
- 3 years and over - 1:8

If the children attend more than 4 hours per day, or
- 1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day
- If all children are over 8 years old and over 1:10.

The service operates Monday to Friday, from 08:00 - 18:00, 52 weeks of the year. It is run by a private provider and works in partnership with North Ayrshire Council to deliver funded early learning and childcare places for eligible children aged two to five years.

Located in the town of Irvine, the nursery comprises three playrooms, and a secure outdoor play area. The service benefits from a convenient location, with easy access to local amenities, including shops, public transport links, and a range of community facilities.

At the time of inspection, 45 children were registered with the service. During the inspection, 20 children attended on the first day and 21 children attended on the second day.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 July 2026 between 10:00 and 17:30. Feedback was provided to the service on Wednesday 8 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:
- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed electronic feedback from seven parents/carers
- spoke with staff and the senior leadership team
- observed practice and daily life for children
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

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, some improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within the Leadership and Management of Staff and Resources section.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing care and developed positive relationships which supported their wellbeing and sense of security.
- Care planning and family involvement needed greater consistency to ensure children's current needs were accurately recorded and reviewed.
- Children enjoyed some meaningful play and learning experiences that reflected their interests and supported their engagement.
- Planning, assessment and communication about learning were not yet consistent, limiting opportunities to fully support children's progress.
- Children benefited from caring and supportive staff relationships, although leadership and improvement systems were not yet fully embedded.
- The service had started its improvement journey and would benefit from a more structured approach to self-evaluation and quality assurance.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service's values and aims reflected a commitment to providing a safe, nurturing environment for children's learning and development. Staff worked to embed these values in daily practice, supporting positive experiences for children and families. Families told us, "The staff are caring and kind and my children love going there" and "They have built positive relationships with my children and make them both feel included and valued." As a result, children experienced warm and supportive relationships which promoted their wellbeing.

Some improvements had been made to indoor play and learning environments, enhancing children's experiences. Plans were in place to further develop the outdoor play environment for all age groups, increasing opportunities for play, learning and development. Families valued outdoor experiences and commented, "Most of the time when I collect my children, they are happily playing outdoors." We discussed the importance of reflecting on the service's values and aims with children and families to ensure they remained meaningful and informed by their views and experiences.

The service had experienced changes in leadership and staffing since the last inspection and was at an early stage of its improvement journey. Families generally spoke positively about staff. However, one parent commented, "The last couple of months, lots of staffing changes have been quite unsettling for the children." At the time of the inspection, plans were in place to recruit and onboard new staff to build capacity and provide greater consistency for children and families.

The service had an improvement plan in place and had identified some priorities for development. Some environmental improvements had been implemented. However, self-evaluation and improvement planning were at an early stage of development, and there was limited evidence demonstrating how progress was being monitored and evaluated or the impact of improvements on outcomes for children and families. The service was aware of the new Quality Improvement Framework and recognised its role in supporting improvement. A more structured approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning would support the service to identify strengths, monitor progress and evaluate the impact of improvement activity.

Quality assurance processes, including monitoring and auditing, were in place. However, these had not been used consistently to support self-evaluation and improvement planning. It was not always clear how findings were followed up or what actions resulted. We discussed developing monitoring of staff practice through regular one-to-one meetings. This would support reflection, celebrate strengths and identify improvement needs. Accidents and incidents were recorded and audited. Audits could be strengthened by identifying recurring themes and required actions. This would help quality assurance information be used more effectively to improve outcomes for children and families (see area for improvement 1).

Staff were safely recruited and registered with the Scottish Social Services Council, supporting compliance with professional standards. The service used the national induction resource alongside organisational procedures to support staff development. Staff told us they felt supported by the leadership team. Evidence demonstrated that staff and room meetings had taken place. Further developing a regular programme of meetings would help to strengthen communication, support professional learning and increase opportunities for staff to contribute to service improvement and leadership development.

Areas for improvement

1. To improve outcomes for children and families, the provider should develop and implement a structured approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning. This should include, but not be limited to, gathering and using the views of children, families and staff, using best practice guidance documents to identify strengths, prioritise improvements, monitor progress and evaluate impact.

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

Children play and learn — 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Playing, learning and developing

Overall, staff were responsive in their interactions with children. They responded appropriately to children's verbal and non-verbal cues. Staff demonstrated some understanding of how children developed, learned and progressed. They generally recognised when to join children's play and when to step back. As a result, children experienced support that promoted confidence, curiosity and emotional wellbeing.

Sensory materials, including playdough, sand and water, were available throughout the playrooms and outdoor environment. This provided some opportunities for children to explore, make discoveries and develop their curiosity. Families told us, "Both of my children are given the opportunity to take part in a wide range of fun activities and experiences" and "The nursery are great at getting them to try new things." During the inspection, children accessed a range of sensory experiences and explored materials independently. As a result, children experienced some opportunities to develop their confidence, creativity and learning through play. Paint stations had been created indoors and outdoors, although these were not used during the inspection. Staff should continue plans to enhance creative experiences. This would provide more opportunities for children to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a range of media.

On the second day of inspection, children experienced more intentional and responsive learning opportunities outdoors. These included a bug hunt using clipboards that reflected children's interests. Families spoke positively about outdoor experiences their children enjoyed and commented, "Playing in the garden and looking for lots of bugs." This reflected children's enjoyment of exploring the outdoor environment and investigating nature. Children were engaged and enthusiastic throughout the experience. They spoke about their learning and discoveries. As a result, children experienced meaningful learning that built on their interests and curiosity.

Literacy and numeracy resources were available within the indoor environment. These included mark-making materials and resources supporting early counting and number awareness. However, opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills were not consistently embedded within play experiences. As a result, children had fewer opportunities to develop language, early mathematical thinking and problem-solving skills through meaningful play. Staff should continue plans to develop the outdoor environment, taking account of children's differing ages and stages. Overall, children would benefit from a wider range of stimulating and appropriately challenging outdoor learning experiences (see area for improvement 1).

There was limited evidence of children's play and learning being shared with families. Some parents told us, "More information on how my child's learning is coming along would be great" and "More regular and formal communication on my child's day/week/progress towards milestones." As a result, opportunities to build on learning at home and previous experiences were not always maximised. Clear expectations for learning, teaching and assessment had not been consistently established or communicated by the leadership team. This limited children's access to consistently high-quality learning experiences.

Planning for children's learning, observations and evaluation had been paused. There was limited evidence that children's views and prior learning consistently informed planning. As a result, children's progress, skills and next steps were not always clearly identified or tracked over time (see area for improvement 2).

Support from the visiting early years teacher in North Ayrshire Council provided opportunities for staff to further develop practice through training and role modelling. This included effective questioning to extend thinking, encourage problem-solving and strengthen learning approaches. This had the potential to improve interactions, increase challenge and achieve better outcomes across children's play and learning experiences.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's play, learning and development, the provider should continue to improve the quality, variety and accessibility of resources across the indoor and outdoor environment. This should include, but not be limited to, providing a wider range of stimulating and appropriately challenging resources, increasing opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy through play, enhancing outdoor play experiences for children of different ages and stages and ensuring resources are used effectively to promote creativity, curiosity and investigation.

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

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

2. To support positive outcomes for children, the provider should develop planning, observation and assessment processes to ensure children's interests, views, prior learning and developmental progress consistently inform play and learning experiences. This should include, but not be limited to, monitoring and evaluating children's progress and achievements, identifying and recording children's next steps in learning, using observations to inform responsive planning and sharing children's learning and progress more effectively with families.

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

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

Children are supported to achieve — 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Nurturing care and support

Staff demonstrated an understanding of the importance of nurturing relationships for children's wellbeing and development. Overall, children experienced warm and responsive care which supported their sense of security, wellbeing and ability to express themselves. Families told us, "The support and care they have shown have been outstanding" and "The staff are friendly and approachable." Staff were attentive to children's emotional needs and provided reassurance when required. As a result, children experienced nurturing care which supported their emotional wellbeing and development.

The setting was welcoming and inclusive, offering a range of spaces that supported social interaction, emotional regulation and opportunities for individual and group play. Staff changes throughout the day supported staff to take breaks and helped maintain ratios. Greater consistency of staff deployment within playrooms would further support continuity of care and relationship-based practice for children.

Transitions, including welcome and home times, were mostly managed by familiar adults and supported through consistent routines. The leadership team welcomed families on arrival, and staff communicated with families throughout the day. Families told us, "The staff always make time to answer any questions I have" and "Staff always stop to tell me about my child's day, feeding, play, sleep etc." This supported information sharing and helped staff respond to children's individual needs. However, some commented that "Drop off and pick up can be rushed" and "During drop off and pick up the staff are busy and it can be hard to catch a member of staff." As a result, opportunities for communication were not always consistent.

Meals were healthy and nutritious and reflected current guidance. Children's allergies and dietary needs were considered appropriately. Families commented, "There is always good healthy food for the kids" and "The staff are always understanding and make sure there is something available that my child is happy to eat." Mealtimes were generally positive social experiences, with staff sitting alongside children to provide reassurance and support. As a result, children felt safe, included and engaged in social interaction. Children were encouraged to develop independence through serving meals and clearing away dishes where appropriate. This supported confidence and responsibility. Some families felt snack choices were limited and commented, "Usually the same snack provided which is toast and banana." Staff deployment during mealtimes could be further developed to ensure younger children received appropriate support and supervision.

Children were supported to develop independence during personal care routines. Where assistance was required, this was provided respectfully and with privacy and dignity maintained. Safe sleep arrangements were in place and staff responded to children's individual sleep and rest needs. Families confirmed, "They are very considerate of my child's sleep" and "The staff are always understanding and make sure there is a quiet, comfortable space available." As a result, children experienced care that met their individual needs, supported wellbeing and promoted confidence.

Monthly support plans were in place for identified children, with some evidence of parental involvement. These plans would have benefited from further evaluation to demonstrate the impact of strategies on children's progress and outcomes. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of the children in their care and responded sensitively to individual needs. Families told us, "I feel that we are listened to and our views are valued" and "I appreciate being able to share my thoughts and feedback." However, some parents commented, "I would welcome more opportunities to be involved in developing and reviewing my child's personal plan" and "I have never seen a personal plan for my child and this has not been discussed with me." Care planning systems and records relating to children's wellbeing had not been reviewed or updated for some time. As a result, information may not always have accurately reflected children's current needs and circumstances. This may have reduced the consistency of care and support provided to children (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's needs are consistently met, the provider should review and update personal plans and associated health and wellbeing information in line with legislation, at least once every six months, or sooner where there is a significant change in a child's circumstances or needs. This should include, but not be limited to, children's health and wellbeing needs, preferences, outcomes, strategies to support them, and records of discussions with children and families. This would help to ensure that accurate, up-to-date information is available to support staff in providing responsive, consistent care and support that reflects children's current needs and preferences.

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

'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).

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

The provider should review the procedures for the preparation of children's bottle feeds. This should include but not be limited to: staff training to be pursed on the safe preparation of children's bottle feeds monitor the effectiveness of staff training to ensure staff are competent in the task of preparing children's bottle feeds.

This is in order to comply with:

Health and Social Care Standard 3.14: I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

The provider reviewed arrangements for the preparation of children's bottle feeds and staff completed training in safe bottle preparation. Training records and evaluations demonstrated learning in how to prepare bottles safely. Staff were able to describe the bottle preparation process, providing evidence that the provider had supported and monitored staff competence in this area.

The service should continue to build on this improvement through ongoing learning opportunities and refresher training to ensure staff remain up to date with current best practice guidance, including safe formula preparation, infection prevention, sterilisation requirements and the nutritional needs of babies.

Regular supervision, observations of practice and reflective discussions would help practitioners maintain both practical competence and a clear understanding of how safe bottle preparation supports babies' health, nutrition and wellbeing.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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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