Apple Tree Nursery
Day Care of Children

46 Balhousie Street
Perth
PH1 5HW

Telephone: 01738561083

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 April 2026

Service provided by:
Apple Tree Nursery (Perth) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2024000751

Service no:
CS2025000120

About the service

Apple Tree Nursery is a day care of children service, registered to provide care to a maximum of 35 children of which no more than 18 children will be aged under 3 years.

The service operates from a converted two-storey house, located close to the centre of the city of Perth. Children are accommodated within two playrooms on the ground floor of the service, which are designated into different age groups. The upper floor of the property has an additional playroom to support focussed group time experiences and quiet time. An enclosed outdoor space at the rear of the property can be accessed from the playrooms on the ground floor.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 April 2026. One inspector from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration 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 feedback from 20 families whose children attend the service
- spoke with the provider, staff and management
- spoke with a visiting professional
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we assessed 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

- The service vision and values were developed with children and families, ensuring they were central to decision making.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes promoted consistently high quality care for children.
- Children experienced a calm, welcoming environment that promoted their wellbeing and a sense of belonging. Spaces reflected children's interests and developmental needs, helping them to make independent decisions about their play.
- Children were engaged in high quality play and learning experiences that supported sustained focus, allowing them to explore their ideas and interests at their own pace.
- Appropriate challenge and support ensured children made good progress in their learning and development.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing care that supported their emotional wellbeing and helped them feel safe, secure and loved.
- The service promoted an inclusive environment that celebrated diversity and promoted a strong sense of belonging.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	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.

The service's vision and values were developed with children and families, ensuring they reflected shared aspirations and responded to their wishes and needs. These placed children and families at the centre of decision making, recognising them as active and valued members of the nursery community. Leaders identified that it would be beneficial to review the vision and values, particularly as many new families had joined the service. The planned review aimed to ensure the vision continued to reflect the evolving needs of those using the service.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were well-embedded. Regular monitoring of practice and procedures enabled staff to identify where improvements were needed and take timely action to maintain high standards. Self-evaluation was informed using a wide range of evidence. This supported to recognise strengths and evaluate the impact practice had on children's outcomes. As a result, children and families benefitted from a service that was committed to continuous improvement.

Leaders created a supportive and encouraging environment for staff. Discussions with staff highlighted that they felt confident to initiate change and contribute to service improvements. A strong culture of shared leadership was strengthened through staff champion roles, enabling individuals to take ownership in developing key areas of practice. Staff were motivated and confident, leading to improvements in practice and positive outcomes for children.

Children and families' views were highly valued and regularly sought to inform developments and drive change. Feedback was used to support responsive decision making, shaped by their suggestions and wishes. Updates on improvements, including progress and next steps were shared with families to keep them informed. This demonstrated commitment to partnership working and meant families felt listened to and involved.

Children were kept safe through robust recruitment and pre-employment checks. Well-established induction processes helped staff to understand the setting and the individual needs of children. This was supported by opportunities for new staff to visit the service prior to commencing in their role. This helped them to build relationships with colleagues and families. The National Induction Resource was used to monitor staff progress and identify where additional support was needed. This ensured staff developed the knowledge and skills required to deliver safe, high quality care.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

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.

Children experienced a calm and welcoming environment that promoted a strong sense of belonging and wellbeing. The setting was furnished to a high standard. Natural and soft lighting, alongside neutral décor, created a calm and homely atmosphere. Wall displays featuring children's artwork, creations and photographs reflected their experiences and achievements. This helped children to feel valued, respected and comfortable within the setting. Respect for the environment was promoted through staff modelling positive behaviours in caring for the nursery. Opportunities for children to take on small jobs and responsibilities encouraged participation and helped children have pride in their nursery environment.

The environment was thoughtfully designed to promote children's independence, confidence and choice. Resources were organised to be easily accessible, allowing children to move freely around spaces and make decisions about their play. Spaces were planned to reflect children's interests and developmental needs. In areas for younger children, the layout provided safe, well-considered opportunities to develop motor skills, including crawling, rolling and pulling to stand. This allowed children to develop independence, confidence and physical skills safely.

Children's emotional wellbeing was supported through access to calm and nurturing spaces to relax. Quiet areas and cosy nooks were available throughout the setting. These allowed children to rest and respond to their individual emotional needs. One child shared, "When it's a long day, I sometimes go to the cosy corner for a rest. It helps me feel calm".

Robust systems were in place to support children's safety, including effective maintenance procedures, clear risk assessments and consistent infection prevention and control practices. Staff used a risk benefit approach to plan experiences, ensuring risks were carefully managed without limiting learning. For example, the use of a tractor within the nursery grounds was fully risk assessed and planned as a meaningful learning opportunity. Children were supported to think about their own safety and plan their play in a considered way. This helped them to develop confidence, independence and a growing understanding of how to manage risk safely.

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.

Children were engaged in a wide range of high quality play and learning experiences that supported sustained focus and concentration. They confidently led their learning, making choices about how to spend their time, exploring their interests and ideas in meaningful ways. A relaxed and unhurried pace allowed children time to become deeply involved in their chosen activities without interruption. As a result, children were supported to develop their thinking, creativity and problem solving skills.

Opportunities to develop language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills were embedded throughout children's daily experiences. Open-ended and real-life resources supported purposeful exploration of early numeracy, while storytelling, singing and rhymes provided rich and nurturing language experiences. Children used their imagination to create their own stories, and digital resources were used appropriately to stimulate curiosity and support problem-solving. Targeted resources, such as 'Concept Cat', promoted word awareness linked to children's interests. Experiences supported children to make good progress in their learning and development.

Links within the community broadened children's understanding of their world and supported the development of key skills. Opportunities to explore nature and participate in intergenerational activities were regularly planned. These helped to build on children's interests and allowed staff to provide targeted learning support. For example, the 'Jungle Journey' experience supported children in developing their motor skills, balance and coordination in an engaging and purposeful way. As a result, children developed increased confidence and a deeper understanding of their community.

Staff interactions were consistently warm, nurturing and encouraging. This created a positive and reassuring atmosphere for children. Staff responded to children's cues, demonstrating skill in extending children's play and allowing play to develop naturally when appropriate. This balanced approach respected children's independence while providing timely, sensitive support to deepen engagement. Children and staff shared moments of laughter and enjoyment, and clearly enjoyed spending time together.

Play and learning were planned responsively, ensuring that experiences were meaningful and child centred. Children's learning was monitored through observations and tracking tools, enabling staff to provide appropriate support and challenge matched to individual needs. This meant that children were supported to make good progress.

Online journals and regular progress discussions helped to keep families included in their child's learning. This strengthened continuity between home and nursery and ensured children's learning was well supported and responsive. Children were encouraged to recognise their achievements and take pride in their learning. Floor books and learning walls allowed them to revisit and reflect on their experiences and have ownership of their learning.

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.

Children experienced nurturing care that supported their emotional wellbeing and helped them feel safe and secure. Staff were consistently warm and engaged with children through positive and loving interactions. Children's cues for comfort and reassurance were recognised and responded to sensitively through cuddles and the close physical presence of staff. The warm approaches and responsive interactions of staff contributed to secure attachments for children.

The service promoted an inclusive environment that celebrated diversity and a strong sense of belonging. Meaningful opportunities enabled children to explore their own cultures and learn about the experiences of others, helping them to recognise what makes them unique. This supported positive self-esteem and the development of respectful relationships.

Children developed an understanding of their rights through rights-based practice embedded in daily interactions. Staff used language that encouraged choice and recognition of children's rights in meaningful ways. UNCRC (United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child) activities were adapted, enabling children to explore their rights through relevant and engaging experiences. This helped children to feel respected and empowered to make choices.

Personal care respected children's privacy and dignity. In the three to five age group, children were supported to communicate their needs independently through thoughtfully introduced resources. This included discreet doorbells to request adult support. For younger children, nappy changing routines were nurturing experiences, with staff engaging positively to ensure children felt relaxed and secure. Children felt safe and in control of their personal care.

Transitions were flexible and responsive, with predictable routines that helped children feel secure and confident. Children were given prior warning of change, giving them time to process information and prepare. This allowed children to move between activities at their own pace.

Children experienced nurturing mealtimes that promoted independence and choice. Flexible snack routines allowed children to decide when they were ready to eat and return to play when finished. Children developed self help skills through serving food, clearing plates and taking part in washing up. Staff shared in mealtimes with children, creating a relaxed and social atmosphere.

Personal plans were kept up to date and developed with families, ensuring they reflected children's current needs. Clear strategies supported staff to plan meaningful and personalised care. Information was shared consistently across the team, resulting in a shared understanding of children's needs. This meant that children benefitted from well-informed and responsive care.

Positive relationships with families were well established. Staff created a welcoming environment where families felt valued and respected. Communication was effective and included daily conversations and regular opportunities for families to engage in nursery experiences. This strengthened relationships and kept families involved. Families highlighted that the homely feel of the service and strong relationships with staff were key strengths. One family shared, "Welcoming, homely atmosphere". Another provided feedback on their relationship with staff. They said, "Easy to speak to and discuss my child's needs and development. They have great two way communication, I am always kept up to date and involved".

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	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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