

Woodlands Pre-School Class Day Care of Children

Queen Street
Carnoustie
DD7 7SU

Telephone: 01241 465 446

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 September 2026

Service provided by:
Angus Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000043

Service no:
CS2007157109

About the service

Woodlands Pre-School Class provides a daycare of children service within a residential area in Carnoustie. The service are registered to provide care to a maximum of 24 children at one time from age 3 years to an age to attend primary school. There are currently 17 children registered with the service. There were 16 children attending on the day of inspection.

The nursery consists of one playroom, toilets and changing facilities. The playroom has free flow access to a large, secure outdoor space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 09 September 2026 between 09:00 and 17:00. This inspection was carried out by one inspector 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. To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received four completed questionnaires from families using the service
- spoke with eight families during the inspection
- spoke with the Manager and Provider
- 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

- Leaders promoted high-quality practice through robust quality assurance activities which provided them with a comprehensive overview of the service and supported continuous improvement.
- Experienced and skilled staff responded effectively to children's individual needs, supporting positive learning experiences and progress.
- Strong relationships with children and families helped create a welcoming and inclusive culture where feedback was valued and used to improve outcomes.
- The service's vision, values and aims were clearly embedded throughout practice and were evident in children's experiences and interactions across the setting.
- Children's rights were embedded across the service and influenced decision-making, improvement planning and daily practice.

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.

The service had a clear vision of "Believe and Achieve", which was reviewed regularly with children, families and staff. The vision, values and aims were evident throughout the nursery and reflected in the curriculum rationale, improvement priorities and daily practice. Child-friendly displays and adapted visual resources helped children understand and identify with the service's values.

Children's rights and child-friendly approaches to safety and risk were embedded throughout the nursery. This supported children to participate in decisions, develop independence and learn how to assess and manage risk. As a result, children experienced a consistent approach that promoted inclusion, wellbeing, participation and achievement.

Improvement planning was evidence based and clearly linked to self-evaluation, national guidance and local priorities. Improvement priorities were measurable, regularly reviewed and focused on improving outcomes for children. Staff were empowered to lead aspects of improvement through champion roles in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This supported distributed leadership and shared ownership of change across the service.

Leaders created a strong culture of reflection, collaboration and continuous improvement. Self-evaluation was embedded throughout the nursery and understood as a shared responsibility. Staff, children and families contributed meaningfully to reviewing the quality of the service and identifying priorities for improvement. Leaders regularly gathered feedback through surveys, consultation activities and the "Question of the Month" initiative. This demonstrated that people's views influenced change. Leaders and staff reflected on practice, environments and outcomes for children using national guidance and a range of evaluative approaches. As a result, improvement priorities were well informed and focused on improving outcomes for children.

Robust and comprehensive quality assurance processes gave leaders a clear overview of practice across the nursery. For example, learning walks, observations of practice and moderation activities were used effectively to monitor the quality of children's experiences and learning. Pre and post evaluation surveys helped leaders measure the impact of changes and identify areas for further development. This supported ongoing improvement and helped ensure children benefited from high-quality experiences and outcomes.

A particular strength of the service was its ability to accurately identify both strengths and areas for development. Inspection findings were closely aligned with the service's own self-evaluation, demonstrating honest reflection, effective monitoring systems and a strong capacity for continuous improvement. Several areas discussed during the inspection had already been identified through the nursery's quality assurance processes. This demonstrated that leaders had a clear understanding of the service and were taking appropriate action to improve outcomes for children.

The setting benefited from an experienced and stable staff team, with several staff having worked within the service for many years. This supported consistent relationships for children and families and contributed to a strong understanding of their individual needs and wellbeing. Staff described feeling valued and well supported through regular professional dialogue, quarterly review meetings and an open-door approach

from leaders. This contributed to a positive team culture and helped support wellbeing and retention of high quality staff.

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.

Children were highly engaged, motivated and actively involved in their play and learning experiences. Skilled staff used theory, best practice guidance and their understanding of child development to provide meaningful opportunities. Children confidently led their own play, made choices and independently accessed a wide range of resources. This meant that experiences positively extended children's curiosity and imagination.

Staff provided children with the time, space and freedom to explore ideas at their own pace within an enabling and appropriately challenging environment. Indoor and outdoor spaces offered rich opportunities for creativity, problem solving and enquiry through open-ended resources and natural materials. As a result, children demonstrated high levels of concentration, independence and enjoyment in their learning.

Literacy and numeracy were embedded throughout experiences. Children developed language and early literacy skills through stories, mark-making activities, vocabulary-rich experiences and opportunities to share their ideas. Numeracy was promoted through meaningful experiences which encouraged children to explore number, shape, pattern, measurement and problem solving. This helped children develop confidence across a broad range of skills.

Staff were highly responsive and demonstrated a strong understanding of how children learn. They skilfully interpreted children's interests, responded to cues and adapted experiences to extend learning. Staff consistently supported children's emotional wellbeing through warm, nurturing interactions and helped children develop self-confidence and emotional regulation. Visual supports were used effectively to promote communication, independence and understanding. This approach enabled children to develop their skills meaningfully.

Staff used skilled questioning and conversations to encourage children to explain their thinking, predict outcomes, solve problems and explore new ideas. Children were encouraged to investigate, ask questions and follow their own lines of enquiry. Interactions were well paced. One family told us, "Every child is treated as an individual". This supported positive relationships, social development and confident learning.

Planning was responsive and based on children's interests, needs and stages of development. Staff used observations of children's interests, theories and enquiries to shape meaningful learning experiences and inform future planning. Floorbooks captured children's voices, ideas and learning experiences, demonstrating that children were active participants in their learning. As a result, children experienced learning that was relevant, engaging and reflected their interests.

Learning folios provided a personalised record of children's learning, achievements and progress. Children's voices were evident throughout observations, which captured their interests, ideas and experiences. Families were encouraged to contribute, supporting a shared understanding of children's development. The service recognised involving children more fully in identifying and reviewing their next steps would help strengthen their understanding of their learning journey and progress.

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.

Children experienced warm, caring and responsive relationships. Staff knew children well and demonstrated a strong understanding of their individual needs, personalities and family circumstances. They worked closely with children and families to ensure support reflected what was important to them and responded to their changing needs. Children were treated with kindness and respect, helping them feel secure, valued and confident in their surroundings.

Staff were attentive to children's cues and supported them to express their needs, feelings and preferences. Warm, nurturing interactions and consistent routines helped children develop confidence, emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging. Children's rights, privacy and dignity were promoted through respectful practice and by enabling children to make choices throughout the day.

Mealtimes were calm, nurturing and social experiences. Children developed independence and self-help skills through preparing snack, self-serving food and drinks, setting tables and clearing away when finished. Staff sat with children and used mealtimes as valuable opportunities to promote conversation, language development and inclusion. Children's choices were respected and they were able to return to play when they had finished. As a result, mealtimes contributed positively to children's wellbeing, independence and enjoyment.

Children's health, wellbeing and support needs were understood and responded to effectively. We saw particularly strong practice in how staff supported children with allergies and individual health needs. Staff worked closely with families to ensure children were safe, included and able to participate fully in nursery life. Staff regularly reviewed children's wellbeing, progress and support needs with families. One family told us "they are amazing, all teachers are fantastic they have supported my child so much, especially with their allergies". Another told us "I've been heard and feel confident, I trust them". As a result, children experienced care and support which was responsive, inclusive and tailored to their individual needs.

Relationships with families were a significant strength of the service. Families were warmly welcomed into the nursery each day and were encouraged to be active participants in nursery life. A wide range of opportunities supported meaningful engagement. Families described staff as caring, approachable and supportive and consistently praised the quality of communication. They told us they felt listened to, valued and confident that staff understood their children as individuals. One family told us "Communication is a key strength they are always in contact with us. They are easy to talk to and very down to earth, they are friendly". This approach meant families felt included in decision making and contributed meaningfully to their children's care, wellbeing and learning.

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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