

Lairdsland Early Years Centre

Day Care of Children

Lairdsland Early Years Centre
Southbank Road
Kirkintilloch
East Dunbartonshire
G66 1NH

Telephone: 01419552310

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 June 2025

Service provided by:
East Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003380

Service no:
CS2021000024

About the service

Lairdsland Early Years Centre is located in Kirkintilloch. The provider of the service is East Dunbartonshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a care service as follows:

A maximum of 95 children not yet attending primary school at any one time.

- no more than 15 are aged 2 years to under 3 years and;
- no more than 80 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

Adult:child ratios will be a minimum of:

- 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.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 June 2025. The inspection was carried out by two early learning and childcare inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with and observed children using the service;
- contacted families and staff through Microsoft forms to gather their views;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff knew children well and were responsive, caring and supportive of children. We observed sensitive and respectful caregiving where children experienced warm and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing.
- Children experienced a setting which was clean, inviting and welcoming.
- There was a shared vision and culture of shared responsibility which helped staff to feel valued and appreciated.
- Staff were motivated and responsive to meeting the needs of children and worked hard to create a positive ethos.
- Management should monitor staff deployment to provide the best possible care and learning environment for children.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Staff knew children well and were responsive, caring and supportive of children. We observed sensitive and respectful caregiving where children experienced warm and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. We observed good relationships between staff and children.

Children were spoken to and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included. Conversations between staff and children supported children's language development with staff using appropriate language and questioning to extend discussion and learning.

We observed responsive child centred play and learning and saw children's independence encouraged in the playrooms. We saw staff responding to younger children's needs and interests, for example, helping them to source water for the mud kitchen. Older children confidently engaged with us telling us about their friends and favourite activities. Staff supported children with their friendships, for example, providing opportunities for children to play together and encouraging children to be friendly. This gave children a sense of belonging which positively impacted on wellbeing.

Transitions for children and families was a focus area for the service. The manager was supporting staff to implement new strategies and we could see that this was impacting positively on children and families. Parents were welcomed into the service and had built good relationships with staff. There were opportunities for parents to communicate and share information with staff and their child's keyworker to ensure that their child's transition was smooth. This helped to build trust and a sense of security. Parents could also take advantage of stay and play sessions which gave them the chance to take part in activities with their children, encouraging and supporting their learning and development. Some parents engaged with the 'families connect programme' which provided fun activities to support learning at home.

Parents who provided feedback about the service commented:

"Wonderful nurturing staff".

"Staff are amazing and are always supporting my child during the transition of coming into and during nursery hours".

"They are warm and welcoming".

"The Early Years Workers are always kind and nurturing to our child. They always support her when entering the early years centre if she is reluctant for me to leave".

"Very welcoming EYC, staff always make you feel welcome".

"The staff are incredible and nothing ever seems too much, they love to chat and spend a lot of time forging good relations with parents and carers".

Personal care routines promoted children's independence, privacy and dignity. Safe sleep practices were observed, children were able to rest and have some quiet time if needed, which helped to support their health and wellbeing.

Children's wellbeing was also supported through the use of personal planning. Personal plans had been

reviewed, with the manager and staff positively responding to the area for improvement recorded at the last inspection.

Plans were now more streamlined and more clearly defined with all care and support information for each child easily accessible. This enabled staff to see what the child's strengths were and which areas of their development had been identified as needing extra support. We discussed some minor alterations that would further enhance personal plans.

Electronic learning journals were being phased out in the service. The manager and staff were in process of developing paper based learning journals which would be accessible to staff and parents in playrooms, increasing personalisation, tactile engagement and the ability to include a wide range of child-led work. We agreed that this may be more engaging, prompting face to face discussions and interactions with children and parents.

Parents comments included:

"Not always someone at the door on drop of and pick up and more regular updates would be nice".

"More feedback in the online learning journal (although this has greatly improved in the past year)".

"We have quarterly meetings to discuss child development especially on the lead up going to school".

Lunchtime was calm and unhurried. Younger children sat with friends and staff, there was lots of chatter. This supported children's early language skills and overall provided a positive sociable experience. Staff were responsive to children's individual needs and stage of development, for example, some toddlers were developing independence by drinking from open top cups and self-feeding.

Older children had lunch helper roles and enjoyed setting tables for lunch. Children's independence and self help skills were promoted by encouraging them to self serve at the table and clear away their plates after lunch.

All children had access to fresh water throughout the day and were encouraged by staff to keep hydrated.

Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs. Most staff were trained in first aid should children require medical assistance. Children's medication and respective paperwork was satisfactory. Administration of medication was carefully audited in accordance with current guidance.

A child protection policy and procedures were in place. There was a designated child protection officer and staff had received training. This ensured they knew how to respond to concerns about a child.

1.3 Play and learning

We observed children having lots of fun with good quality play, learning and development opportunities on offer. The resources available were appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. Children had access to a wide range of resources and activities such as water play, sand play, woodwork, imaginative play, physical play. Children enjoyed loose parts and natural play in the garden.

The layout of the playrooms provided children with plenty of space to move around freely and access resources. We observed that at times throughout the day different areas of the nursery were not accessible for children, for example, outdoor area, mezzanine area, indoor playroom.

We noted the very positive impact on children when the outdoor area was opened for play and encouraged the manager and staff to consider how this could be more effectively managed.

There was a mix of planned and spontaneous experiences which supported children to learn and develop through play. Learning provocations were set up to spark children's interest, stimulate thoughts and ideas and encourage questioning. Most children were empowered to lead their play and learning through the support and interactions of staff. Staff scaffolded children's learning using observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences. We discussed how encouraging reflective practice could further support staff to enhance the quality of observations and provide valuable insights into children's development, learning style and individual needs.

The early years teacher supported staff to foster early development in children's language, numeracy and literacy. Play based learning and tailored activities actively promoted children's development in areas such as language acquisition, cognitive skills and social interaction. We saw children counting, singing, sorting, chatting, writing and drawing.

We observed that the book corner was not well used by children and discussed this with the manager and staff. They agreed to monitor this and take appropriate action to ensure children benefitted from this area.

Children enjoyed community outings to the park, shops and post office. The depute manager was collaborating with external forest school professionals to identify a local area for this purpose. We supported development in this area to promote the social and emotional wellbeing benefits of forest school experiences for children.

Parents' comments included:

"My son enjoys playing with his friends at nursery, bringing in his toys to share and playing with the staff".

"The staff are constantly developing new activities, the facilities are fantastic and the atmosphere welcoming, fun and inspiring".

"More day trips out the nursery would be good, she loves playing in the garden but hasn't done any external trips such as park, library, shops etc which was a big focus in her old EYC".

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a setting which was clean, inviting and welcoming. The play areas benefitted from natural light and ventilation. Children had lots of space to freely move around indoors and outdoors. Furniture and resources were of a good standard and organised to promote free flow play.

The design of the indoor/outdoor environment was a key strength within the service offering children a range of experiences. Children had the freedom to run around in the courtyard, mezzanine and outdoor area to develop their physical skills and creativity. The availability of open-ended resources enabled children to engage their imaginations, develop life skills and spark curiosity. As a result, children were motivated, engaged, confident and having fun.

We asked the manager to monitor access to all environments to ensure children were provided with diverse learning opportunities. (See 1.3 Play and learning).

Staff had created some homely spaces for children to relax. The courtyard area had been reorganised to

provide larger spaces for children to move around and cosy spaces to help children practice self soothing and feel safe and secure, for example, wooden snugs were provided with cushions and soft items. Play spaces reflected children's interests and provided a range of opportunities for active play and learning. We saw staff helping children to use resources in their own way to develop their play and match their own interests and intentions.

The management team were committed to continuous involvement of staff in planning and decision making about the play environment to ensure the best outcomes for children. Since the last inspection the woodwork area was available at all times to children and children enjoyed visiting community facilities.

Children could access toilet facilities within the playrooms. Where children needed support, this was carried out in a designated changing area meaning children's dignity and personal preferences were respected.

There were playroom quality assurance checklists and risk assessments in place to monitor areas and ensure safety and security for children. This meant that children's activities were not compromised and they were supported to enjoy challenging, fun experiences. We asked the management team to monitor staff numbers and positions in different play areas to help identify and minimise risk to children within the setting, both indoors and outdoors.

Accident and incident records were completed and shared with parents. Monthly audits were carefully completed to identify any areas of potential risk or concern.

Children's information was stored securely within the office and children were monitored by staff when using IT equipment. Children's personal information was safe and protected. The premises and resources and equipment were well maintained. Infection prevention and control practices, including food preparation were satisfactory.

Parents' comments included:

"There is a cosy corner/library that is very relaxing and children can go there if they want".

"My son is always allowed to have time to relax or even nap if he gets tired. The 2-3 room will allow him to come in and take some time to lie down as it is quieter in there".

Staff told us:

"Risk assessments are in place to ensure that children are safe at all times. If anything isn't safe we report to the building manager and it gets solved straight away".

"The building is kept very clean and if there are any maintenance issues the building manager is always in site".

"Absences and holidays can affect how many areas are open".

"We now have a full staff team, however, holidays and sickness can sometimes leave us short and can be difficult to cover all areas as it is such a big space".

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The management and staff team were committed to delivering a quality service for children and families. To support improvement the management team had developed a centre action plan, an improvement plan and quality assurance overview. A range of quality assurance processes to evaluate the quality of provision were in place. The service was gathering feedback from children and their families to plan further development and improvement of the service.

Regular management team meetings were held with the manager providing very positive support to the depute. The staff team were settled and working well together. Management shared their intentions to continue to focus on building and supporting the team, involving staff in improvement planning.

One to one support meetings had been held with staff. Regular full staff meetings were organised. Staff told us they welcomed opportunities for appraisal and enhanced communication.

A quality assurance monitoring calendar was in place. This included a range of areas such as monitoring of learning journals, transitions, new children, new staff, personal plan updates, champion roles, peer observations and an environment audit.

The management team had recently developed a short term action plan to help them address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

These strategies helped to promote a shared vision and culture of shared responsibility. Consequently team morale was positive with staff telling us they felt valued, appreciated and had a sense of belonging. Staff were involved in decision making, had responsibility for leading aspects of provision through their champion roles and had improved access to training and development opportunities.

Staff were motivated and responsive to meeting the needs of children and worked hard to create a positive ethos. Staff were keen to support further development of the centre and involve children and parents in this journey.

We clearly saw improvement across the service with some areas still under development, for example, effective management of play areas such as the courtyard and outdoor area.

We acknowledged that there was a period of change with temporary managers over recent months but we were confident that the current manager was a strong leader who would drive forward necessary change.

Parents' comments included:

"There is always opportunities to give feedback and get involved with developing the service such as, having forms like this to fill out, stay and play sessions and family connects".

"Staff offer opportunities to engage".

"Invited to activities like stay and play, curriculum evenings and given opportunities to provide feedback. Regular newsletters are also sent to parents. Really happy with improvements over the past year".

Staff commented:

"Over the past year and a half there has been a great deal of work go into the general operation of the centre with the focus being staff's thoughts and ideas".

"Staff have had time to get together and complete self evaluation forms".

"I think this has improved in the last year also but there's still more room for improvement".

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staffing levels were satisfactory and supported delivery of good care. Staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit children.

Management continued to work hard to build and support the staff team. This was welcomed by staff who told us that there were positive working relationships and a positive ethos in the centre.

Improved access to training and organised in service days, the introduction of shift rotations, daily support from senior practitioners, development of an enhanced staff induction process to support new staff, updated staff handbook, and staff consultations promoted staff wellbeing, helped staff to feel valued and supported them to develop practice.

Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communication with families. Senior staff and keyworkers were available to chat and exchange information with parents.

Staff were provided with walkie talkies to ensure effective deployment, supervision and quality engagement with children across the centre. We observed that not all staff used these effectively which meant that play areas were understaffed and/or closed at times during the nursery day. Children therefore did not always experience tailored support and learning opportunities. We asked management to carefully monitor this practice to ensure that the right staff are in the right place at the right time, with the right skills and support to provide the best possible care and learning environment for children.

Staff commented:

"Most of the time all rooms are able to open due to the amount of staff we have in the building".

"I would welcome more staff to enable us to meet the needs of children who required additional support".

"Absences and holidays can affect how many areas are open".

Parents' comments included:

"I have noticed there has been less staff turnaround in the past year and I believe improved numbers of staff. There are also senior early years workers who have been doing a wonderful job".

"I think all the staff always have the children's best interest at heart and are always going above and beyond for them".

"Need extra supervision on kids when playing".

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

Personal plans should be streamlined and more clearly defined with all care and support information for each child easily accessible. This would enable all members of staff to see what the child's strengths are and which areas of their development have been identified as needing extra support.

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

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

This area for improvement was made on 30 July 2024.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The system of medication should be reviewed to ensure better organisation and safe administration of medication. This should be in accordance with the Care Inspectorate guidance, Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services.

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

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

This area for improvement was made on 30 July 2024.

Action taken since then

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.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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