

Parkhill Early Learning and Childcare Centre Day Care of Children

Salmon Inn Road
Polmont
Falkirk
FK2 0XF

Telephone: 01324 506 782

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 September 2025

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003048025

About the service

Parkhill Early Learning and Childcare Centre is located in the grounds of St. Margarets Primary School in Polmont, Falkirk. It is close to local amenities such as shops, transport links, library and medical centre. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 127 children at any one time, of those 127 no more than 3 are aged under 2 years; no more than 20 are aged 2 years to under 3 years and; no more than 104 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time. The service has an under-three's room and five other distinct zones for older children to access across their day. The large, safe and secure outdoor play space is directly accessible from the playrooms.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 September 2025 between 09:25 and 16:00. Feedback was given on the final day of the inspection. The inspection was carried out by three 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:

- spent time with children
- received feedback from 26 of their family members
- spoke with all staff and management
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

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.

During this inspection we have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

Leadership was values-driven, empowering staff and placing children and families at the heart of improvement.

Children thrived through high-quality play, supported by skilled, responsive interactions.

Care was warm, individualised and inclusive, meeting emotional and physical needs, especially for children with additional support needs (ASN).

Strong family partnerships built trust and supported shared understanding of learning and care.

Personal planning and tracking were robust, reflecting each child's unique journey and progress.

Family engagement was meaningful and consistent, with initiatives like home visits and staff empowerment groups enhancing relationships.

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 made an evaluation of very good for this quality indicator. There was a high standard of provision for all children, and the setting is committed to improving over time.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

Leadership across the setting was very effective, underpinned by a clear and meaningful vision, values and aims (VVA) that were consistently reflected in staff practice. Leaders and staff shared a strong commitment to delivering high-quality experiences for children and families and consistently demonstrated ambition and high aspirations in all aspects of their work.

Children benefited from a rights-based approach to care, which promoted their dignity, privacy and individual needs. Leaders successfully cultivated a positive and inclusive culture, where staff felt genuinely valued, empowered and supported, to contribute meaningfully to the life and development of the setting.

Improvement planning was strategic and inclusive, taking account of the views of children, families and staff. This collaborative approach ensured that changes were purposeful and paced appropriately, with a clear focus on enhancing outcomes. Leaders and staff worked together to ensure that high-quality play and learning remained central to all improvement activity, and that plans aligned with both local and national priorities.

Communication was a key strength. The vision, values and aims (VVA) were clearly understood and embraced by the wider staff team, children, families and external professionals. This shared understanding supported a collaborative and consistent approach to practice. Some examples of this included regular multi-agency meetings with professionals such as health visitors and other medical teams and joint planning sessions with families to co-create personal plans.

Self-evaluation was robust and purposeful, enabling staff to reflect critically on their work and continuously improve the quality of learning experiences.

Quality assurance processes were well-established and had an evident positive impact on outcomes for children and families. For example, regular peer observations and reflective discussions enabled staff to refine their interactions, leading to more responsive and meaningful engagement with children. Tracking systems were used effectively to monitor progress, and review meetings ensured that personal plans remained relevant and tailored to each child's needs. Feedback from families was routinely gathered and used to inform improvements, such as adapting routines for children with complex medical needs and enhancing communication strategies.

Recruitment was approached with care and intention, ensuring that new staff aligned with the setting's values and ethos. Effective induction and mentoring processes supported staff to settle quickly and confidently into their roles, enabling them to meet the needs of children and families from the outset.

Leaders actively promoted family engagement through creative approaches such as empowerment groups, which offered meaningful opportunities for families to connect with the service. Initiatives like the pantry highlighted the setting's commitment to supporting families in practical and respectful ways.

Children play and learn **5 - Very Good**

We made an evaluation of very good for this quality indicator. There was a high standard of provision for all children and the setting is committed to improving over time.

Playing, learning and developing

Staff across the setting demonstrated a strong understanding of how children develop, learn and progress. Their deep knowledge of child development informed high-quality practice, resulting in children who were successful, responsible and confident in their play.

Well-considered learning environments were thoughtfully designed to promote a broad range of skills, including language and literacy. These spaces were further enhanced through skilled and intentional interactions, which supported children's development in meaningful ways.

Staff worked effectively with families, sharing learning and promoting a shared understanding of the curriculum rationale. This collaborative approach fostered trust and supported the development of strong, respectful relationships between the setting and families.

Children thrived as they were consistently given time, space and support to make choices and express their voice. Staff interactions were authentic and natural, adding value and enhancing the overall quality of children's experiences.

Skilled practitioners regularly used techniques such as sustained shared thinking, wondering aloud, and developmentally appropriate questioning to extend children's thinking and learning. Staff were attuned to both verbal and non-verbal cues, demonstrating a clear understanding of when to engage and when to observe, allowing children's play to unfold naturally.

Tracking processes were very effective, with staff confidently recording and assessing children's progress and achievements. This informed planning and ensured that learning experiences were tailored to meet individual needs and interests.

Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

We made an evaluation of very good for this quality indicator. There was a high standard of provision for all children, and the setting is committed to improving over time.

Nurturing care and support

Children across the setting consistently experienced warm, responsive and compassionate care, which supported both their emotional and physical wellbeing. Staff delivered individualised care routines with kindness, adapting thoughtfully to each child's evolving needs. This was particularly evident in the care provided to children with additional support needs (ASN) and complex medical conditions, where staff demonstrated attentiveness and sensitivity.

Transitions were carefully planned and supported, ensuring children felt secure and confident as they moved through different stages and spaces. The environment was designed to support choice and independence, allowing children to move freely and engage in experiences that reflected their interests and needs.

Personal planning was a key strength of the service. Plans were child-centred, co-created with families, and regularly reviewed to reflect each child's unique journey. Families' views were actively sought and respected, with careful attention given to the individuality of each child and their family circumstances.

All children were recognised as unique and capable individuals. They were listened to, valued and respected, with their voices shaping their experiences within the setting. Children were empowered to lead their own play and learning. For example, during outdoor play, children used large loose parts to create an ice-cream shop. Indoors, children used playdough to create models inspired by their own ideas using leaves and other natural resources. Staff supported this by providing open-ended tools and prompts, while allowing children to take the lead, encouraging creativity, fine motor development and storytelling. These child-led experiences promoted independence, confidence and deep engagement in learning.

Staff worked in partnership with external health professionals, to ensure holistic support for children and families. This multi-agency approach strengthened outcomes and built confidence among staff and families alike.

During the inspection, we spoke to ten families, and they consistently highlighted the positive relationships with staff and the value of family engagement opportunities. Staff had created a welcoming and inclusive environment, where family insights and contributions were genuinely appreciated. Some of their comments included:

"We are welcomed every day, and all staff know my child really well, they also take time to get to know parents too".

"All of the staff are professional, friendly and approachable. They have taken the time to get to know my family and genuinely care".

"From day one the staff welcomed us and our daughter into the ELC. They took time to get to know us as a family and reassured us throughout the settling in period. Even within a large ELC, all staff know our daughter and take the time to speak to us during drop off and pick up".

Home visits formed the foundation of relationship-building, and this approach was highly valued by both staff and families. It enabled strong connections to be established early, fostering trust and mutual understanding.

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 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.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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 cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

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.