

Sgoil Araich Lacasdail Day Care of Children

Laxdale Primary School
Newmarket
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS2 ODY

Telephone: 01851 702 171

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 October 2025

Service provided by:
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Service provider number:
SP2003002104

Service no:
CS2011303370

About the service

Sgoil Àraich Lacasdail is a service provided by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and is registered to provide early learning and childcare education to a maximum of 40 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school. The service provides Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig learners education in two rooms within Laxdale Primary School.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 October 2025. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. During our inspection there were 19 children in attendance. 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:

- Received electronic feedback from families who used the service
- Spoke with staff and management
- Spoke with children using the service
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. 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

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

- Children's health, safety and wellbeing were promoted through regular auditing and monitoring processes.
- Children, families and staff should continue to be involved in service improvements.
- Staff worked in partnership with families, creating a shared approach to supporting children's needs.
- Children had free flow access to outdoor play to support their wellbeing.
- Children were settled and showed confidence in their environment.
- Staff had a strong understanding of each child and responded with kindness and compassion in their care.

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	4 - 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 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, when taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

Staff and management were friendly, approachable and professional, engaged positively throughout the inspection. Their commitment and motivation helped enhance the quality of experiences and outcomes for children attending the service. One parent shared, "Lovely setting. My wee one loves going to sgoil àraich the staff are always so friendly."

The service's values, vision, and aims were reflected in daily practice, creating an inclusive environment where children were happy, respected, and engaged in learning. We saw the values reflected in practice as staff interacted with children warmly and respectfully, whilst creating laughter during play. This approach supported children's sense of belonging and emotional security. Reviewing these with new children and families could further strengthen shared understanding and promote ownership and partnership across the nursery.

Auditing and monitoring processes supported children's health, safety, and wellbeing. Regular accident and incident audits ensured any patterns of accidents were identified and addressed, while playroom monitoring led to improvements in engagement and learning. Monitoring had led to improvements in children's play and learning. This was particularly evident within numeracy, where staff had developed use of finger counting for visual number representation and introduced money into play spaces to strengthen numeracy. These processes collectively ensured positive outcomes for children.

Parents had actively participated in self-evaluation processes to identify areas for improvement, including completing questionnaires on stay-and-play sessions and providing suggestions to enhance the service. The manager had recently introduced self-evaluation processes aligned with the new quality improvement framework to support continuous improvement. We discussed with the manager the importance of continuing to use self-evaluation processes and actively involving children, families, and staff to further strengthen and enhance outcomes for children.

The service's improvement plan was tailored to the nursery's needs. It focused on upskilling practitioners to identify curriculum learning in responsive planning and increase their knowledge of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) experiences. One staff member shared, "I have participated in STEM training which I found helped me to gain a better knowledge of STEM and use it in my setting." These improvements were evident as staff followed children's interests and extended their learning. We observed children enthusiastically engaging in digital technology activities and exploring materials through mixing and merging. These experiences supported their creativity, confidence, and early problem-solving skills.

The service utilised the National Induction Resources to equip newly recruited staff. This resource, combined with support from management and playroom leads, provided a structured approach to the induction process. New staff reported feeling supported when they joined the service, and with guidance from all staff, they became aware of their roles and responsibilities in delivering quality outcomes for children.

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.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children were engaged in play for extended periods both indoors and outdoors during the inspection. They led their own play and made choices based on their interests. One parent shared, "All the resources are easily accessible to all the children in the room at all times so that the children can lead their own learning and decide what direction they want to take it in." Staff responded promptly to children's requests for play materials and provided support when needed. For example, when a child wanted to paint on large paper on the floor, staff supplied the resources and helped set up the experience as the child requested. This responsive approach extended learning and deepened engagement. It promoted independence, creativity, and sustained concentration, which benefited children by building confidence and supporting their development.

Staff provided children with opportunities to be curious through inviting play spaces and well-thought-out provocations. Open-ended, real-life, and natural resources sparked curiosity and excitement, leading to exploration, imaginative play, and meaningful learning experiences. Materials such as pasta and rice, along with water, sand, flowers, and autumn-themed items, encouraged children to engage in potion-making and imaginative play. As a result, children developed creativity, deepened their understanding of the world around them, and built confidence through real-life role play and sensory experiences.

Children accessed a well-maintained, secure outdoor area and moved confidently between indoor and outdoor spaces. Free-flow play promoted independence, with children dressing themselves appropriately before going outside. Resources such as the mud kitchen and water runs supported numeracy through natural materials. Staff responded to children's interest in outdoor play and extended learning, for example by helping move resources outside so children could continue building with friends. This approach fostered independence, physical development, and a connection with nature. Parents shared, "The setting has free flow play to the outdoors. My little girls loves being able to go in and out whenever she pleases "and "My child enjoys a wide range of activities and learning outdoors. Between messy creative play to balancing and testing her gross motor skills, imaginative play and so on. They have the same experiences and learning outdoors as they do in the playroom."

Literacy was actively promoted and evident in children's enjoyment of books and the wide selection of reading materials available. Singing played a positive role in daily routines, supporting language development and expanding vocabulary in both Gàidhlig and English. Responsive interactions, combined with effective role modelling by staff, further supported language development across the setting.

Staff engaged playfully with children during interactions, creating a warm and positive atmosphere. These interactions built trusting relationships and supported children's emotional wellbeing and confidence. This was evident when a child became excited by new resources that allowed them to share their love of singing. Staff actively listened, praised, and joined in with the child, helping to build confidence and follow their interest. Experiences observed reflected a balance between intentional and responsive planning. Staff provided learning opportunities linked to key developmental outcomes while remaining attuned to children's emerging interests. This approach demonstrated a child-centred ethos, where children's voices and choices were valued and used to shape learning experiences.

Children's learning was shared with families through an online platform, with clear links to the curriculum. This supported effective communication and helped keep families informed and engaged in their child's learning journey. A review of sampled learning journals showed strong evidence of intentionally planned experiences. We discussed with the manager the benefits of including more personalised observations that capture children's unique interests, achievements, and next steps. This approach would add depth to documentation, better reflect children's voices, and celebrate their progress more fully.

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.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children in the setting were observed to be settled, happy, and secure in their environment. They were nurtured by staff who demonstrated kindness, warmth, and responsiveness in their interactions. Staff were attuned to children's emotional needs, offering comfort and reassurance through cuddles and hugs when appropriate. Some parents commented, "I can't praise the care and kindness that staff show to my child enough. I have absolutely no worries about the care my child receives while attending the setting." and "The staff are very friendly and they got to know my child and my family very quickly when we joined the nursery. These caring relationships contributed to a sense of wellbeing and attachment, creating a safe and supportive atmosphere.

Transitions were recognised as a significant part of children's experiences within the setting. Staff placed a strong emphasis on supporting children through these changes to ensure they felt secure and confident. The service understood the importance of transitions and had a nursery-to-school transition programme in place throughout the year. Children had regular opportunities to engage with school staff, taking part in weekly stories, songs, and other experiences. This approach helped build trusting relationships in a familiar environment, supporting smooth and positive transitions to school.

Staff knew children and families very well and had developed trusting and respectful relationships. They worked with families to ensure each child's individual needs were met. We observed staff sharing meaningful updates about children's experiences at pick up that were open, warm, consistent and inclusive for all children. Parent's comments included, "Staff are always very welcoming and friendly at pick up and drop off. They always provide me with a handover of how the day has gone and if there is anything to note." and "Staff always give great info about how she has been playing and learning." This strong communication helped children feel secure and supported. It also promoted continuity of care and strengthened the partnership between home and the setting, which contributed positively to children's emotional wellbeing and learning.

Children experienced relaxed and sociable mealtimes. These were unhurried, allowing children to enjoy conversations with staff and peers, which supported the development of their language and social skills. During snack time, children were encouraged to be independent by serving themselves and clearing away their own dishes. At lunchtime, which took place in the school canteen, staff made good use of opportunities to promote life skills. They encouraged children to cut their own food and tidy up afterwards. Staff remained present throughout to ensure children's safety during mealtimes.

Personal plans were in place for all children and included essential information such as emergency contacts and GP details. These plans also contained relevant details to help staff meet each child's individual needs. For example, strategies to support settling-in, the use of visual aids like 'now and next' boards, and information about involvement with external agencies were clearly documented. Plans were reviewed with parents and updated as needed, ensuring they remained current and meaningful. As a result, children received consistent and tailored support, which helped them feel secure, settle well, and make positive progress in their development.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - 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.