

Clarkston Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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Airdrie
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Telephone: 01236 794 805

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 November 2025

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2009215814

About the service

Clarkston Primary School Nursery Class provides a daycare of children service in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00, Monday to Friday. It offers a mixed model of care, including morning/afternoon sessions year-round and full-day term-time sessions. The service is delivered from a single-storey building with a secure outdoor play area and is registered for up to 32 children aged three to not yet attending primary school. During inspection, a maximum of 24 children were present.

The service is close to local amenities and can be easily accessed using public transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 and 19 November 2025 between 08:30 and 17:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was present during the inspection as part of our quality assurance processes. 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:

- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed electronic feedback from 11 parents/carers
- spoke with an additional three parents/carers
- reviewed feedback from three visiting professionals
- spoke with staff and management
- 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.

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.

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

Key messages

- Staff interactions were consistently warm, responsive and promoted children's emotional wellbeing.
- Children enjoyed free-flow access to outdoor play, supporting independence and physical development.
- Leadership demonstrated a strong commitment to improvement, with opportunities to strengthen evaluation processes.
- Parents valued communication through learning journals and stay-and-play sessions, and the service is exploring ways to reintroduce community experiences.
- Mealtimes were calm and sociable, with opportunities to increase independence through more choice.
- Personal plans were detailed, regularly reviewed and developed collaboratively with families.
- Staff deployment was effective, ensuring ratios were maintained and children's needs met throughout the day.

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	4 - 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

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The service demonstrated clear vision, values and aims that were evident in planning documents and improvement plans. Priorities were shared effectively with staff, who confirmed they understood the goals and felt involved in improvement activities. Quality assurance systems were structured, including monitoring calendars and audits. These were linked to national frameworks which helped to ensure children's safety, wellbeing and development.

New staff were welcomed through a robust induction process. They were supported by mentors to use the national induction resource. Leaders ensured staff were introduced to key policies, procedures and expectations. Induction included time to observe practice and opportunities to ask questions, which helped staff feel confident. Records showed induction was completed for all new staff and covered safeguarding, infection control and medication processes. We discussed that it may be helpful to allow staff opportunity to reflect on professional reading during induction. This would allow them to identify any potential impact on practice and would support future learning opportunities.

Staff told us they felt welcomed and well informed, which supported consistent practice across the team. They described feeling supported by leaders who were approachable and available when needed. As a result, children experienced care from confident staff, creating a stable and nurturing environment that promoted wellbeing and learning.

Staff were allocated champion roles in areas such as literacy, STEM and outdoor play. This promoted distributed leadership and supported continuous improvement. Staff fostered strong relationships with families and professionals, creating a collaborative ethos. They told us: "My relationships with families are friendly, professional, open and honest." Parents confirmed this by telling us, "Staff are always welcoming, friendly and engaging at drop off/pick up time. Communication is open and easy." This partnership approach supported families to feel respected and involved in decisions about their child's care.

Targeted professional learning opportunities strengthened staff confidence and improved consistency in supporting children's needs. Training was linked to improvement priorities. These focused on approaches which promoted high-quality interactions and emotional wellbeing. Staff were encouraged to identify their own learning needs during professional review discussions. As a result, children experienced consistently high-quality interactions that promoted their emotional wellbeing and supported their individual needs effectively.

Staff wellbeing was prioritised through an open-door policy and access to professional development. One staff member told us, "My senior leaders are always readily available to listen and talk, ensuring my wellbeing needs are met". These approaches helped to create a stable environment where staff worked collaboratively to improve outcomes for children.

Clear priorities and structured monitoring supported consistency in practice and promoted continuous improvement. To build on these strengths, the service should evaluate the impact of improvement actions more systematically. This should include parent's and children's voices in quality assurance outcomes. Increasing leadership visibility in the playroom would further strengthen relationships and reflective practice.

Children play and learn 4 – Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

Staff demonstrated an understanding of child-led approaches. They used observations, multi-agency information, developmental profiles and individual care records to inform their decisions. This ensured experiences were responsive and matched each child's stage of development. Staff told us "All planning outcomes are led by children with them having the ability to take their learning in their own way". Parents confirmed this "There seems to be an activity plan open to my child every day but [they have] the choice to focus on what interests [them]".

Children confidently led their own play. For example, during a story-based activity, one child was so familiar with Stick Man that they began 'reading' it aloud. Others created stick models linked to the story. Staff extended learning by asking open-ended questions and introduced descriptive language. This approach promoted independence and ensured learning was meaningful and engaging.

Children benefited from a well-resourced indoor and outdoor environment. Free-flow access to outdoor play enabled them to move confidently between a variety of experiences. This supported both physical development and decision-making. We observed children exploring ice and frost with their hands and feet, using tools such as hammers to break the ice. During these activities, staff enriched language development by introducing descriptive words like cold, wet, hard and spiky. Parents praised the impact, commenting "We have seen a huge improvement in [their] confidence outdoors with climbing and playing independently since starting nursery". These opportunities encouraged children to take appropriate risks, build resilience and develop social skills through collaborative play.

Professional learning delivered by visiting specialists strengthened staff practice. Training focused on strategies to support communication and language development. Staff described these opportunities as highly beneficial. One staff member told us, "Training has helped me gain more experience and knowledge and is making me grow in my learning". This professional development contributed to inclusive practice and enabled targeted support for children with additional needs, ensuring all children could participate fully and make progress. Staff effectively promoted language development using signs and visual aids to support understanding. As a result, children demonstrated confidence in expressing themselves, improved understanding of routines and greater engagement in learning activities.

The service had a clear improvement plan in place. Staff implemented responsive planning to meet identified priorities. Listening and talking were promoted through effective questioning and modelling language during play. Staff used an observation tool that measured how settled and focused children were during play. This helped identify whether experiences support wellbeing and deep involvement, allowing improvements to be made where needed.

Outdoor learning remained strong, with plans to reintroduce community experiences. Parental involvement improved through Learning Journals and stay-and-play sessions. These developments reflected the improvement plan and resulted in positive outcomes for children.

The service actively broadened children's experiences by reintroducing community visits and outdoor learning beyond the nursery grounds. These opportunities allowed children to explore new environments, build confidence and apply their skills in real-life contexts. Consistent staff deployment provided stable relationships and high-quality interactions, creating a secure and supportive learning environment. Together, these approaches enriched learning, promoted independence and strengthened social and emotional development. To sustain and build on these strengths, the service should continue to embed community-based experiences and plan them regularly.

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 warm, responsive and individualised care that promoted their sense of safety, happiness and belonging. Positive relationships and consistent routines supported their confidence and overall wellbeing. Children expressed enjoyment and security through comments such as: "I love to play with friends". Parents highlighted the quality of experiences, stating: "[They] love outdoor play and the playground is very well equipped," and "My child loves painting and playing in the sandpit". As a result, children felt secure, happy, and engaged in play that reflected their interests. They developed confidence, strong social connections and a sense of belonging within the nursery environment.

Staff prioritised children's emotional security and wellbeing. All children had individual personal plans. Multi agency plans were in place for identified children, and strategies were tailored to meet specific needs. Visiting professionals highlighted collaborative practice. One told us, "Nursery staff are keen to listen to suggestions from other professionals and to discuss how these would work within their playroom. They had developed a calm bag alongside the children with choices given of what to include". This child-led strategy promoted self-regulation and inclusion.

Safeguarding practice was robust and consistently applied. Staff confidence in their responsibilities ensured procedures were applied consistently, reducing risks and creating a secure environment. Physical measures such as alarms on gates and whiteboards for tracking children's whereabouts supported effective supervision. Parents confirmed their trust in these systems. One parent told us, "Such a secure nursery - they will not let anyone in or out without safe words or parents' approval." This reassurance strengthened partnerships with families and promoted confidence in the quality of care. As a result, children experienced a setting where they felt safe, nurtured and able to trust the adults around them, enabling them to engage fully in play and learning.

Routines supported children's wellbeing and promoted a calm, nurturing environment. Children experienced sociable lunches where helpers were clearly identified by lanyards, fostering responsibility and inclusion. The children were proud to tell us about their "special job", and were seen to be focused whilst carrying out their identified tasks.

We observed staff responding warmly to individual needs. For example, whilst washing faces after lunch, a member of staff playfully said, "Let me see your face - that's a funny face". This created a positive, relaxed atmosphere. When a child expressed dislike for a food item, saying, "I don't like watermelon," staff replied, "That's okay," demonstrating respect for choice and supporting autonomy. Quiet spaces such as the reading area and home corners were available for rest. This helped to ensure children could regulate their emotions and engage in calming activities.

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	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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