

Clober Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 January 2026

Service provided by:
East Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003380

Service no:
CS2003016967

About the service

Clober Early Years Centre, operated by East Dunbartonshire Council, is registered to provide a day care service for up to 103 children not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. At the time of inspection, 65 children were in attendance. The service is located within Clober Primary School in Milngavie. Children are cared for across four playrooms and have direct access to the enclosed outdoor play space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 and 8 January 2026. 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:

- spoke with children using the service
- gathered feedback from 15 families through online questionnaires
- spoke with staff
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within leadership, children thrive and develop in quality spaces, and children are supported to achieve.

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 demonstrated warm, compassionate interactions with children and families, creating a safe and welcoming environment.
- Staff demonstrated a deep understanding of child development and effectively used national guidance to enhance learning.
- The headteacher, nursery leadership, and staff team demonstrated openness to advice and support, reflecting a clear capacity for change.
- While children experienced care in a welcoming environment that supported their independence, some areas were identified for improvement, including aspects of cleanliness, maintenance, and infection prevention, such as the appropriate storage of cleaning equipment.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 – Good

Leadership and management of staff and resources

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

During the inspection, the headteacher, depute head of nursery, and wider staff team engaged positively. They showed openness to advice and support, reflecting a strong commitment to improvement and clear capacity for change. The provider supported the process by visiting the setting on the second day to discuss areas needing attention. This timely input ensured priorities were identified and agreed actions established promptly, enabling the setting to implement changes without delay. This collaborative approach highlighted a shared focus on improving outcomes for children and families.

The vision, values, and aims showed a commitment to providing a safe, nurturing, stimulating, and inclusive environment. These principles placed relationships at the heart of practice, encouraging children to respect themselves and others. The service told us they plan to review these and were looking for ways to involve children, families, and staff, promoting a shared and inclusive approach. The nursery should consider a tailored approach to ensure implementation reflects the service and the developmental stages of the children. This will help maintain relevance and ensure that the vision, values and aims are meaningful and achievable within the nursery setting, while still aligning with the primary school priorities.

The headteacher should continue to adopt a more visible role within the nursery, strengthening support for management and the wider team. This increased presence should support quality assurance and monitoring, allowing policies and procedures to be embedded effectively. We suggest the leadership team revisit their internal child protection and complaints policies to ensure they remain up to date and aligned with local authority requirements, current legislation, and best practice guidance.

Staff participated in self-evaluation tasks during in-service days. However, we would encourage management to implement opportunities for staff to engage in more frequent discussions around self-evaluation. Both the management and staff team should continue to build confidence and leadership roles to empower staff to take ownership and contribute actively to positive change. Clear communication and regular monitoring should maintain consistency, identify priorities, and celebrate progress, while also strengthening relationships.

This would promote a deeper understanding of the process, encourage active participation, and foster a greater sense of ownership in driving continuous improvement. As a result, the nursery will create a culture of reflection and collaboration, leading to improved outcomes for children. (See area for improvement 1).

An improvement plan was in place, prioritising child-centred planning and children's rights. Staff valued training opportunities and reflective practice visits to other settings. They spoke positively about the Up, Up and Away programme and champion roles, which strengthened learning and teaching in literacy, numeracy, child development, and schematic play.

The staff team had been in post for some time and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The service developed an in-house induction aligned with the national induction resource. Ongoing professional discussions supported staff to reflect and share good practice. We recommended continuing to explore peer assessment approaches to make them meaningful and supportive. Staff participated in professional reviews twice a year. To support consistency and professional growth, we suggested that opportunities be introduced for staff to meet with the headteacher, for example through open-door periods. These meetings would help strengthen relationships and provide ongoing support.

Areas for improvement

1. To support continued best outcomes for children and families. The provider should develop and implement robust quality assurance systems. This should include but not limited to:
 - Further enhance formal monitoring of staff practice and engagement to maintain high standards and support ongoing professional development.
 - Ensure regular staff involvement in the self-evaluation process, promoting reflective practice and continuous improvement.
 - Conduct regular monitoring of the environment to maintain a safe and healthy setting for children.
 - Update and develop internal policies and procedures, including those relating to child protection, the administration of medication, and complaints to ensure alignment with local authority requirements, current legislation, and best practice guidance.

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

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Children experience high quality spaces

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Children experienced care in a welcoming environment that supported their independence and confidence in accessing most indoor play spaces. Staff explained that they were in the early stages of reviewing and adapting spaces to better reflect children's needs and interests. We would encourage the team to consider ways to make the environment more communication-friendly, such as using visual aids to support children with language and communication needs.

Inspection report

On the first day of inspection, we identified several areas within the indoor and outdoor environment that required attention. These included maintenance of the outdoor area and concerns about cleanliness, general interior defects, and structural changes within the 3-5 toilet area. We discussed these concerns with management and the provider, and they took immediate action. The provider responded promptly, and improvement plans were already underway during the inspection. As a result, we felt reassured that the necessary improvements would be made. We would encourage consideration of current research and best practice guidance, such as Space to Grow and Realising the Ambition, to support this improvement journey.

We also identified concerns relating to infection prevention and control. We recommend a deep clean across the environment, including areas accessed by staff. The environment was found to be cluttered and untidy, which posed health and safety risks. We suggested that management communicate these messages promptly and effectively, while ensuring sensitivity and consideration for staff wellbeing. We suggested providing appropriate support and training to enable all staff to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. This approach would help ensure improvements are made and sustained. (See area for improvement 1).

On the third day of inspection, we observed improvements in some of the areas previously identified. For example, the kitchen area was tidied and high-level clutter removed. This immediately made the kitchen look safer and more welcoming.

Monitoring by the leadership and staff team should remain a priority to ensure children's safety, with regular safety checks carried out appropriately and in a timely manner. While risk assessments and safety checks were observed during the inspection, these should be revisited to ensure completion is effective and consistent. Strengthening these processes will promote accountability and respect for the environment.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure that all areas within the nursery are cleaned and maintained to the highest standards to support good infection prevention and control practices. This should include, but not be limited to:

- Immediate attention to cleaning the premises, ensuring appropriate training is in place for relevant staff.
- Immediate attention to fixings and fixtures identified during inspection, both indoors and outdoors.
- Implementation of best practice guidance in relation to personal care and safe sleep practices.
- Provision of relevant training in food handling and infection prevention and control.

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

Children play and learn **5 – Very Good****Playing, learning and developing**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The depute head of nursery and senior practitioners demonstrated strong commitment to enhancing staff knowledge of child development. Staff spoke enthusiastically about using national guidance realising the ambition alongside local authority documentation. As a result we found this was having a positive impact on practice and staffs ability to skilfully support children.

We observed staff extending children's play and thinking through effective questioning and by creating an environment that was purposeful, engaging, and responsive to children's needs and interests. Staff expressed pride and motivation, sharing a collective sense of positivity about future plans and continued improvements. We found their enthusiasm reflected a strong team ethos and a clear focus on delivering the best outcomes for children.

Learning areas were thoughtfully planned, offering varied experiences that encouraged exploration and curiosity. Provocations sparked imagination and wonder, including loose parts play, sand and water activities, construction, and a home corner where children chopped fresh vegetables. Areas and experiences evolved throughout the inspection, demonstrating responsiveness to children's interests. On the second day, most children were deeply engaged in play, sustaining involvement for extended periods. Staff supported learning effectively, encouraging perseverance, asking purposeful questions, and enabling children to direct their own play.

Children played well together, showing respect, kindness, and cooperation. In the home corner, they pretended to feed a baby, and used their imagination in cooking activities. During arts and crafts, children focused on drawing, mark-making, and writing their names. We observed children having meaningful conversations about home, their pictures, and the snow outside. Laughter and enjoyment were evident, highlighting staff's confidence in promoting collaboration and creativity.

Staff working with children under three demonstrated a strong understanding of learning through play. They supported heuristic and schematic play confidently, encouraging curiosity, creativity, and independence. The children explored natural, open-ended materials and sensory experiences, including sand, water, playdough, painting, and mark-making, as well as materials for transporting and enclosing. Staff joined in their play and followed children's ideas, enabling choice, self-expression, and language development. Literacy and numeracy were embedded through songs, stories, and opportunities for filling, emptying, and mark-making. Families told us "The staff are excellent. The curriculum of activities is fantastic, my little one has learned so much across language, numeracy, play and socialisation. He/she loves it there and we feel very happy with the service."

Children accessed free-flow outdoor experiences, exploring ice, drawing with chalk, and observing weather changes. These supported confidence, coordination, and social skills through meaningful play. We recommend revisiting free-flow arrangements for the older children, as some children had to wait for extended periods of time.

Learning experiences were documented and shared with families through floorbooks and e-journals. National guidance, including realising the ambition, curriculum for excellence, and children's rights, were evident in practice. Documentation showed achievements celebrated and learning consolidated. Families told us "Clober EYC is fantastic. The nursery itself has a great variety of toys and activities. The staff are great and always open to providing any additional assistance needed. They really do go above and beyond!"

Planning remained a key focus within the improvement plan, aiming for child-centred approaches and robust assessment. Staff were in the early stages of developing planning and required more time for this to be embedded. Planning should continue to ensure breadth, depth, and challenge across the curriculum, aligned with national guidance, including tracking next steps, documenting children's voices, and strengthening family engagement.

We would encourage the leadership team to continue monitoring and evaluating progress regularly to improve consistency, enhance outcomes, and sustain quality across the service.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Nurturing care and support

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

During the inspection, we observed strong, positive relationships between staff, children, and families. Staff interacted with children in a kind, caring, and compassionate manner, offering cuddles, praise, and reassurance to help them feel safe and secure. Families told us "Every single staff member knows my children by name, and I believe they truly care about my children. They take great delight in telling us parents what our children did that day and seem proud of their accomplishments in nursery. Every single member of staff is friendly, welcoming, knowledgeable and genuine. We have never had any concerns about any staff."

Snack and rolling lunch routines were calm and unhurried, supporting independence, safety awareness, social skills, and language development. Children's dietary needs were supported, and the nursery followed the Local Authority's three-week menu plan. We suggested reviewing the current menu to ensure food is age appropriate and prepared in line with best practice guidance 'Setting the Table'. Fresh drinking water was available throughout the day, promoting healthy choices and wellbeing.

We sampled medication held in the service and found medication records and storage arrangements require to be reviewed and policies updated in line with current best practice guidance 'Management of Medication in Day care and Childminding Services'.

Personal care routines, including nappy changing, were carried out with privacy and dignity. Staff encouraged independence in toileting with praise and reassurance. We suggested creating a designated changing area for the older children to avoid disrupting younger children and to meet the older children's needs.

Safe sleep practices were followed in the under threes, with staff monitoring sleep areas and providing comfort. We discussed changes needed for older children who required time to rest or sleep. We suggested reviewing the current space in line with best practice guidance 'Space to Grow'.

Personal plans were in place and staff could describe how they supported children. However, we identified inconsistencies across the process. For example, from the information recorded it was not always clear how staff would support and enhance children's health, wellbeing and safety or foster their play and learning. In line with legislation, the management team and staff should streamline information and develop a consistent approach across the service. This will ensure children's information is clear, concise and supports positive outcomes for all children. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection and will be repeated.

(See area for improvement 1).

The nursery worked collaboratively with professionals, including health visitors and speech and language therapists, to support children's needs. Risk assessments and individual support plans were in place, but management should ensure these are regularly updated to reflect children's current needs and reduce potential risks.

Staff spoke warmly about family engagement initiatives, such as stay-and-play sessions, bedtime reading, curriculum evenings, parents' meetings, and transition supports. Transitions between playrooms were well planned, with detailed information shared to ensure continuity of care. Effective communication helped children feel secure and familiar in new environments. Families told us "There are regular stay and play sessions, parents evening, curriculum reviews and open evenings. We feel there are ample opportunities to engage with the service. Also, at pick up and drop off staff speak at length about our children's activities for the day. We also get updates via parent zone, the online diary system and its lovely to see pictures and updates of their day."

Moving forward we would encourage the service to welcome parents of the older children into the nursery at drop off and collection times. During these times, management should support the deployment of staff to enable them to develop stronger connections with the families. As a result this will increase parental engagement with the service, which will positively impact on the quality of children's experiences. We suggest management and staff refer to best practice guidance 'Me, My Family and My Child Care Setting'.

Areas for improvement

1. To support consistent and high-quality care and learning experiences, the manager and staff should streamline information gathered to ensure individualised personal plans and all about me documents are sufficiently detailed and completed accurately. This should include, but not limited to:

- Clear and robust, up-to-date information relating to the holistic needs of the child.
- Identified next steps in learning, with focused targets and strategies that are clear and concise for all staff to follow, supporting children's health, welfare, and safety needs as well as play and learning goals.
- Regular reviews that document both the voices of children and their families.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

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

The manager and staff should audit children's personal plans to ensure that the quality of information recorded is consistent and relevant to individual children.

Health and Social Care Standards 1.15 - My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices

This area for improvement was made on 25 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Although personal plans were in place and management had monitoring measures implemented, we still identified inconsistencies in the process. Therefore, this area for improvement has been repeated. See area of improvement under nurturing care and support.

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The manager and staff should review the system for recording accidents and incidents, in particular where a child has received GP or hospital treatment. A risk assessment should be completed for any child if appropriate.

Health and Social Care Standards 4.11 - I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

This area for improvement was made on 25 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Accident and incident records were completed to a good standard and signed by both staff and parents/ carers. A policy was in place to support this practice. Senior staff conducted monthly audits to review records, identify patterns, and determine whether further action was required. The service demonstrated awareness of Care Inspectorate notification procedures.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The manager should ensure that staff are given adequate time to complete information in children's learning journals and conduct personal research and planning.

Health and Social Care Standards 4.11 - I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

This area for improvement was made on 25 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Staff are allocated weekly time away from the floor to support the documentation of children's planning and assessment information. We reviewed documentation confirming that adequate time was provided. Staff spoke positively about the various development opportunities available to them.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

The provider should improve staff facilities in the service and access to technology for staff. Health and Social Care Standards 4.11 - I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

This area for improvement was made on 25 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Staff now have access to technology, including iPads and desktop computers. This enabled them to appropriately capture and document children's learning and share it with families.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children experience high quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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