

Meadowburn Gaelic Medium Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

Meadowburn Primary School
Lendale Lane
Bishopbriggs
Glasgow
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Telephone: 01419 552 293

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 January 2026

Service provided by:
East Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003380

Service no:
CS2003014705

About the service

Meadowburn Gaelic Medium Early Years Centre, operated by East Dunbartonshire Council, is registered to provide a day care service for up to 27 children aged from 3 years to not yet attending primary school. At the time of inspection, 11 children were in attendance. The service is located within Meadowburn Primary School in Bishopbriggs. Children are cared for across one playroom and have access to the enclosed outdoor play space nearby.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 and 23 January 2026. The inspection was carried out by two 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 eight 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, 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

- Children experienced a strong nurturing environment, with warm, respectful, and emotionally attuned interactions consistently promoting their wellbeing.
- The revised vision and values, early mentoring systems, and supportive relationships with families reflected a shared focus on providing a nurturing, inclusive Gaelic rich environment.
- To further strengthen children's learning and ensure consistent progression, planning and support should be more individualised and consistently applied.
- Staff showed enthusiasm for developing their practice and leadership roles, contributing to continuous improvement, parental engagement, and children's rights.

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

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 and staff team engaged positively. They welcomed advice and support, which showed their commitment to improvement and their capacity for change. The provider supported the setting by attending the feedback session and sharing plans to offer ongoing support around the management structure and future developments. This collaborative approach showed a shared focus on improving outcomes for children and families.

The service recently reviewed its vision and values, which demonstrated a commitment to providing a safe, nurturing, stimulating, and inclusive environment. These principles placed the Gaelic language at the heart of practice and encouraged children to show care and kindness towards themselves, each other, and the wider community. The service explained that it planned to review the aims during the summer term, involving children, families, and staff. This approach aimed to promote shared ownership and inclusivity.

We recognise that there have been recent changes to staffing within the team. Initial systems have been introduced to provide effective mentoring, support, and leadership for staff. The headteacher should continue to offer ongoing support within the nursery, which will further strengthen quality assurance and monitoring arrangements and help ensure that policies and procedures are implemented consistently across the setting. (Area for improvement 1.)

We also recommend that the headteacher revisits their internal child protection and complaints policies to ensure they are current, reflect best practice guidance, and align with relevant legislation. These policies should include up to date Care Inspectorate contact details.

Staff shared that they are actively involved in regular informal discussions focused on continuous improvement. They spoke passionately about their leadership roles and responsibilities, including areas such as parental engagement and children's rights. We encourage the headteacher to implement more formal opportunities for staff to engage in frequent and structured discussions around self-evaluation.

The headteacher and staff team should continue to work collaboratively to build confidence in staff leadership roles, further empowering staff to take ownership and contribute positively to ongoing improvement. We recommend that the provider and headteacher work together to define clear and robust management and leadership roles and responsibilities. Clear communication and consistent monitoring will support continuity of practice, help identify priorities, and celebrate progress. This approach will foster a shared understanding across the team and strengthen a collaborative culture of improvement.

The staff team had been in post for some time and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The service has developed an in-house induction; however, we would suggest revisiting this to ensure it aligns fully with the National Induction Resource. Staff told us their wellbeing is supported through regular check-ins, professional reviews, and designated wellbeing inputs during in-service days. This supports a positive staff culture, helps maintain morale, and contributes to a motivated and confident team.

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 be limited to:

- Implementing clear and robust leadership and management roles and responsibilities, ensuring accountability and a shared understanding across the team.
- Ensuring regular, formal staff involvement in the self-evaluation process, promoting reflective practice and driving continuous improvement.
- Conducting regular monitoring of the environment to maintain a safe, healthy, and nurturing setting for children.
- Updating and developing internal policies and procedures including Administration of Medication, Accident and Incident Procedures, and Child Protection to ensure they reflect current best practice guidance, local authority procedures, and relevant legislation.
- Ensuring robust audits are completed for the policies and procedures listed above, to evaluate effectiveness, identify gaps, and support consistent, high-quality practice.

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 play and learn 4 – Good

Quality Indicator Playing, learning and developing

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

Our observations demonstrated that children were surrounded by full immersion in the Gaelic language. Although many children responded in English, it was evident that they were developing a strong understanding of Gaelic. Staff were observed providing good quality play experiences, and overall, children were supported to engage meaningfully in their learning. At times, however, some children would have benefitted from further challenge. Staff are encouraged to remain mindful of maintaining an effective balance between child-initiated play and practitioner framed experiences, as doing so can promote deeper learning, offer appropriate levels of challenge, and support the use of open-ended questioning.

Most children were motivated and engaged during free flow play, with staff supporting their engagement through positive and responsive interactions. Staff should remain particularly mindful of children who require additional adult support to engage in play, especially where communication or interaction may present challenges. Consideration should be given to how these children can be further supported to participate meaningfully, for example through the use of visual aids, clearer cues, or targeted adult interaction. This will ensure that all children are fully included, experience appropriate support, and can benefit from high-quality, engaging learning experiences.

Learning areas were thoughtfully planned, offering a range of experiences that encouraged exploration and curiosity. Provocations sparked imagination and wonder, including opportunities to create Scottish castles, engage in water play, explore construction materials, and participate in role play within the home corner. Children confidently explored these areas with interest. We observed that staff were considering children's needs through the creation of small, nurturing spaces, providing quieter and more contained areas that support a calm and supportive environment.

Children played well together, showing respect, kindness, and cooperation. We observed a transition activity with children from Meadowburn Early Years, during which both staff and children engaged in Gaelic singing and games. This demonstrated positive relationships, effective partnership working, and a shared commitment to promoting Gaelic language and culture in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Due to layout restrictions, children access outdoor experiences as a group and at arranged times. During the inspection, children were observed enjoying the space by running, climbing, and engaging in games with staff. The provider and headteacher shared plans to promote freer access to fresh air and outdoor opportunities. We suggest revisiting staff deployment to enable small groups of children to access the outdoors throughout the day. This would support more responsive, child led learning, increase opportunities for physical activity, and ensure children benefit from regular exposure to the natural environment.

Learning experiences were documented and shared with families through floorbooks, ejournals, and wall displays. The use of floorbooks was seen to be a positive approach in supporting parents' understanding of play based learning and demonstrating how learning opportunities are embedded throughout daily experiences. Staff should ensure that evidence captured within floorbooks remains individualised and meaningful, avoiding a generic approach, so that the focus on each child's unique learning journey is clearly evidenced and celebrated.

Children were engaged in a range of positive play and learning experiences, and practitioners demonstrated a good understanding of children's interests. Planning reflected a generally child centred approach; however, identified next steps were often generic and difficult to track over time. This limited the extent to which planning clearly built on individual children's learning or demonstrated sufficient challenge and progression.

While some observations were in place, it was not consistently clear how these were used to track children's progress or identify the specific skills and learning intentions that children were currently working towards. As a result, it was difficult to see how progress was being monitored and how next steps were reviewed, updated, and evaluated.

The service should now further develop planning approaches to extend children's curiosity and creativity. This should include ensuring that experiences consistently build on children's interests and ideas, offering opportunities for exploration, problem-solving, and creative expression. Clearer learning intentions and next steps should be identified within planning to demonstrate how experiences are designed to extend skills over time, enabling staff to track progress more effectively and provide appropriate challenge for each child. (Area for Improvement 1.)

Areas for improvement

1. The service should further develop its planning and assessment approaches to ensure that children experience consistently high-quality learning opportunities that build on their individual interests and support appropriate challenge and progression. This should include, but not be limited to:

- Review the current planning format to ensure staff can clearly identify individual children's learning intentions and next steps.
- Review observations to ensure they are used consistently and purposefully to monitor children's development, identify emerging skills, and inform ongoing planning.
- Strengthening learning intentions, next steps, and the tracking of progress will better equip staff to plan experiences that extend children's curiosity, creativity, problem-solving skills, and overall learning.
- Review how planning is evaluated and shared with families, ensuring that information is clear, meaningful, and reflective of individual children's learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Nurturing care and support

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 nursery demonstrated a very strong nurturing ethos, with staff consistently promoting children's wellbeing through warm, respectful, and emotionally attuned interactions. Positive relationships were at the heart of practice, creating an environment where children felt valued, understood, and cared for.

It was evident that staff had formed positive and meaningful relationships with the children and their families. Families told us, "We trust them, value them, they listen and are very supportive." And "We feel we know the staff well to chat to easily and feel we could ask them things." Staff were kind, caring, and compassionate in their interactions, which helped children feel welcomed and nurtured within the setting. Children experienced warm, patient, and nurturing responses from staff, who provided comfort, praise, and reassurance. This approach supported children to feel safe, secure, and emotionally supported.

Staff presented as calm and gentle in their manner, which contributed to a relaxed and reassuring environment. This calm atmosphere was further enhanced by the use of soft, gentle background music, creating a soothing and welcoming space for the children.

We observed that the service is following the Local Authority's menu, which is compliant with Setting the Table guidance. We would encourage the service to revisit current practice in relation to packed lunches. While we recognise that exceptions may be required, staff should remain mindful of the impact on other children at the table and ensure that any such decisions are clearly recorded within individual care plans.

Personal care routines, including nappy changing, were carried out sensitively and in a manner that supported children's comfort and wellbeing. The provider has shared their plans to create a designated changing space, which will further enhance privacy and dignity for children during personal care routines.

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Personal plans were in place and generally supported children's wellbeing, with staff gathering relevant information and using a range of strategies to meet individual care needs, including for children with additional support needs. To strengthen this further, the service should develop personal plans to be more individualised and consistently recorded, ensuring all key information, strategies, and targets are clearly captured within formal plans. This will help staff identify what children are currently working towards, track progress over time, and review and update strategies effectively to promote each child's wellbeing and development.

Staff were observed to have positive and respectful relationships with children's families. We were particularly impressed by the daily offer of stay and play sessions, which allow families to spend up to one hour in the setting each day. This strongly promotes partnership working and provides meaningful opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning and development, supporting continuity between home and the nursery.

Day to day drop off and pickup routines further reinforced an open door approach, with staff sharing key messages in a relaxed and welcoming manner to ensure effective communication and smooth handovers. Parents are encouraged to engage with the service and have their views listened to and respected through ongoing communication, informal discussions, and opportunities to provide feedback.

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 provider should review staff capacity to provide appropriate support to children learning Gaelic as an additional language as well as more vulnerable children with specific learning and development needs.

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 26 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Observations indicated that children were immersed in the Gaelic language. An increased number of staff spoke Gaelic, further supporting this immersion. Staff also shared the training they had undertaken to promote the Gaelic language, along with additional opportunities to support children with additional support needs.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The manager should ensure that staff are given adequate time to observe and record information in children's learning stories 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 26 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Observations and discussions indicated that staff had adequate time to plan, document and review children's plans, as well as to undertake continuous professional development activities. Staff held champion roles, which supported their professional development. Learning journals, planning documentation and wall displays were viewed and evidenced this development.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The provider should ensure that there are staff who are trained in paediatric first aid in the service at all times.

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 26 February 2019.

Action taken since then

An appropriate number of staff had received first aid training, and appropriate medical equipment was available.

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 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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