

St. Andrew's Early Childhood Centre Day Care of Children

Grassyards Road
New Farm Loch
Kilmarnock
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Telephone: 01563 549 549

Type of inspection:
Announced

Completed on:
4 February 2026

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2003015812

About the service

St. Andrew's Early Childhood Centre is provided by East Ayrshire Council. The service is located within St. Andrew's Primary School, in Kilmarnock.

It is registered to provide a day care service for a maximum of 64 children from those aged three years to children not yet attending primary school. There were 52 children attending the service at the time of the inspection.

Children have access to a large central playroom, two smaller playrooms and an enclosed outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an announced inspection which took place on 3 and 4 February 2026. This 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 throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children during their play
- received three completed questionnaires from parent/carers and eight from staff
- spoke with staff and the management team
- 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.

During this inspection we 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

- A clear shared vision and strong relationships created a warm, welcoming ethos.
- Quality assurance processes were well established supporting consistency in care.
- Staff felt well supported, which contributed to positive outcomes for children.
- Children experienced varied, engaging play and learning that built their confidence and independence.
- Skilled staff provided high quality support, helping children make clear progress.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing care that supported their emotional security, confidence and overall wellbeing.
- Effective personal planning and strong family partnerships helped ensure children's needs were understood, responded to and celebrated.

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

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

Leaders and staff shared a clear vision for the service and worked together to create 'a warm, welcoming ethos that fostered a love of learning and wellbeing'. We saw this was underpinned by a close knit, confident team who were proud of the service. Relationships between staff, children and families were respectful, calm and supportive, creating a positive atmosphere where everyone felt valued. Families described the service as "a caring, loving environment," "such a good team," and said staff "deserve all the recognition possible... you can tell they love their job". As a result, the service provided high quality experiences that supported children's wellbeing, engagement and sense of belonging.

The values of 'ready, respectful and safe' were evident in interactions, the environment and approaches used. Children could explain what the values meant, and gave examples of how they could follow these in the setting. Staff, children and families had all contributed to developing the vision. This helped everyone felt included and ensured the wishes of the service users were respected.

Leadership was promoted at all levels. Staff were empowered to lead change through a range of leadership roles, resulting in positive developments that broadened children's experiences. These included community projects, drama collaborations with secondary pupils and a children's council. These opportunities helped children develop independence, decision making skills and a stronger sense of belonging.

Families were encouraged to share their feedback through questionnaires, conversations and evaluations. The service used this information to inform change. For example, they introduced evening family engagement sessions to make participation easier for working families. This supported stronger family connections and gave families more meaningful ways to be involved in their children's learning.

Self evaluation approaches were established and guided improvement planning. Children, families and staff contributed to these processes, through a children's council, parent council and team meetings. This ensured priorities were relevant and tailored to children and their families. The service described how previous improvements had strengthened children's experiences and contributed to positive learning and wellbeing outcomes. Examples included environmental audits which had resulted in a redesign of spaces to promote creativity. This ongoing reflective approach meant the service continued to build on its strengths and recognise areas for development. This helped maintain high quality experiences for children.

Quality assurance processes were robust. This included regular monitoring of planning, written observations, interactions and mealtimes. Recent review of children's progress identified areas where further support and challenge were needed, leading the team to focus on numeracy development. This ensured children received targeted support that enhanced their confidence and learning.

Staff told us they felt well supported by leaders to carry out their roles. New staff benefited from a clear induction programme that included mentoring. The team worked closely together and supported one another. This created consistency and stability for children. As a result, children were supported by staff who were confident in meeting their needs and able to respond sensitively to their individual stages of development.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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 were busy and engaged in their play. They took part in a wide range of experiences that supported their interests and development. Indoors, they explored construction, role play and arts and crafts. Some areas of the setting were themed in response to children's interests, for example there was a hospital area and a 'Minecraft' area. Outdoors, they used woodwork tools, sand and climbing equipment in ways that encouraged curiosity and physical development. These opportunities helped children build skills, confidence and enjoyment in their learning.

Children experienced a well balanced mix of spontaneous and planned learning. Free flow access between indoors and outdoors for most of the day meant they chose where and how they played. This supported their independence and decision making. Planned experiences, such as mindful walks and adult led games, offered children calm, focused time when they needed support. Staff knew how to capture children's interests effectively to introduce new ideas. Examples included leading an investigation project through drama and storytelling, and making good use of the local community. This approach broadened children's experiences and helped them make meaningful connections in their learning.

There was a strong focus on numeracy which was evident across the setting. Staff created rich play experiences that supported mathematical thinking. The environment was thoughtfully organised to promote number, pattern and problem solving. Small group sessions provided additional support and challenge. Staff extended learning further by using questions that encouraged children to think and talk mathematically, using size vocabulary such as taller and longer. This helped children develop early numeracy skills and increased their confidence in using mathematical language.

Interactions were warm, supportive and contributed to a relaxed, positive atmosphere. Practitioners listened carefully to children's ideas and responded in ways that encouraged conversation and promoted learning. Singing, stories and discussions helped extend learning naturally through everyday interactions. As a result, children felt secure, valued and motivated to join in.

Children's learning was recorded well through regular, high quality observations. Staff had benefited from recent training, which had built confidence and improved observation skills. Observations were meaningful and used effectively to monitor progress and plan next steps. Achievements and goals were shared with families through an online learning platform. Families told us they enjoyed seeing updates, and one parent said, "I love that I can share photos from home." This strengthened the partnership between home and the service and ensured children's achievements were recognised and celebrated across both settings.

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 were treated with compassionate, kind, and nurturing care. Staff responded to children's needs promptly and sensitively. Parents told us, "they care so much about each child", and "they know my girls well and I know they are doing their every best for them thriving and meeting every milestone with the best support". Morning routines supported children very well. They were welcomed warmly by staff and offered additional support when needed, such as cuddles when upset or one to one time. This meant children felt safe, valued, and emotionally secure, helping them to settle quickly and begin their day with confidence.

Supporting children's wellbeing was a strength of the service. Staff carried out daily emotional check ins and used mindful walks to help children understand and express how they were feeling. Key workers also observed children's levels of engagement and wellbeing and reviewed this information with leaders each term. As a result, children received support that was thoughtful, responsive and tailored to their emotional needs, helping them feel secure, understood and ready to learn.

Lunch was a calm and positive experience. Staff supported children well, modelling good eating habits and creating a sociable atmosphere through warm, relaxed conversation. The service's 'nurtured lunch' approach helped children feel comfortable and at ease throughout the meal. This meant children felt secure, unhurried and able to enjoy mealtimes with confidence.

Personal plans were in place for every child and were kept up to date through regular reviews. These plans reflected each child's health and wellbeing needs, interests and development, with clear strategies in place to support them. Relevant information, such as medication requirements and risk assessments, was linked effectively within each plan. Families were involved in sharing updates, ensuring plans remained accurate and meaningful. This promoted continuity of care, strengthened relationships and supported positive outcomes for children.

The service offered a range of opportunities for families to be involved in their children's learning. Families took part in sessions such as 'Fun with Food', 'Bookbug' and 'Stay and Play', which helped them share experiences and see how their children learned through play. Families were also kept well informed through regular newsletters, face to face conversations, an online app and the learning journal messaging function. This meant families felt included, confident and connected to their children's experiences. This strengthened relationships and supported continuity between home and the service.

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

Procedures relating to administration of medication should be updated referring to current guidance. Management should monitor procedures to ensure practice is reflective of the service policy.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that as a child, 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 18 June 2019.

Action taken since then

We found that medication procedures were up to date and in line with best practice. Quality assurance processes were in place to monitor medication procedures.

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	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

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