

St. Luke's Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

Pennyburn Road
Kilwinning
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Telephone: 01294 552 131

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 February 2026

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003016031

About the service

St. Luke's Primary School Nursery Class is provided by provider North Ayrshire Council. The early learning and childcare centre is registered to provide care to maximum of 32 children at any one time aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of inspection 30 children were in attendance.

The nursery operates from a classroom within the school and children had direct access to a secure outdoor area within the school grounds. The service is close to transport routes, shops and community services.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 February 2026. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received electronic feedback from 22 parents/carers

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.

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 were nurtured, engaged in quality experiences and having fun.
- Staff knew children well and responded to their individual needs with kindness and respect.
- Children had a voice in their play, care and learning and this was reflective of the experiences that were provided.
- Children's play and learning was enhanced by through responsive interactions with staff.
- Management and staff were committed to ensuring they were a highly skilled and confident team who worked well together to provide positive outcomes for children and families.

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

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.

The service's vision, values, and aims had recently been reviewed in consultation with families. They accurately represented the ethos of the nursery, celebrating its individuality while remaining aligned with the wider school community. We discussed with management that, moving forward, children should also be involved in reviewing the vision, values, and aims. Including their voices would strengthen their sense of belonging and ownership within the service.

An improvement plan, developed in partnership with staff, was in place and effectively guided ongoing development based on the needs of the service. We observed progress across several key areas, including staff engagement in self evaluation processes and the introduction of a safety champion role, which helped children develop their understanding of risk.

A quality assurance calendar supported the management team in monitoring and auditing important aspects of the service, such as personal plans, medication procedures, and accident records. This thorough approach to quality assurance helped staff maintain children's safety and wellbeing.

Self evaluation processes were well established and informed the identification of improvements and ongoing developments across the service. Time was taken to reflect on practice, set priorities, and manage change at an appropriate and achievable pace. Staff and families contributed their views through questionnaires, and children's feedback was regularly used to shape resources and experiences within the playrooms. This collaborative approach supported meaningful self evaluation and helped the service identify both strengths and areas for further development.

We observed that, overall, staff were deployed effectively, and their supervision contributed positively to children's safety and wellbeing throughout the day. Staff communicated clearly when leaving the room and worked cohesively as a team. While children's needs were being met, there was potential for a reduction in indoor support whilst staffing was focused on outdoor areas. We discussed with management the need to review deployment across indoor and outdoor spaces throughout the day to ensure all children's needs continue to be met.

Children benefited from a skilled and knowledgeable staff team who were committed to delivering high quality care, play, and learning. Staff engaged in regular training to ensure they remained informed about current best practice and evidence based approaches that support positive outcomes for children and families. Training covered areas such as child protection, children's rights and trauma informed practice. Staff also held champion roles in areas such as children's rights, outdoor learning, health and wellbeing, and sustainability. These roles helped ensure that children's rights and individual needs were consistently supported in daily practice.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good**Play 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 happy, having fun and fully engaged in their play. They spent extended periods engaged in activities both independently and with peers. Children were encouraged to lead their own play and to make choices throughout the day, including deciding when they wished to go outdoors. One parent shared, "My child is encouraged to learn more about things he's interested in. If he mentions something, the staff take their time to help him learn more."

Children's play and learning were supported through high quality, thoughtfully presented experiences that stimulated curiosity and imagination. Examples included a large block play area, a well resourced outdoor space, a water tray, and a home corner stocked with real life materials. The structure and flow of the day respected children's right to play, while group activities, such as making playdough and building with magnetic shapes, encouraged children's social skills and development.

Language, literacy, and numeracy skills were enriched through responsive and purposeful interactions. Staff skilfully modelled language and used developmentally appropriate questioning to extend vocabulary and understanding. For example, whilst making playdough, staff encouraged children to use the recipe to build literacy and maths skills, and everyday routines like putting on gloves were turned into opportunities to develop counting skills using children's fingers.

Planning approaches were child-centred, and reflected children's interests and stages of development. Children experienced a balance of planned and spontaneous opportunities that supported their engagement and met their needs. Planning linked clearly to national curriculum frameworks to support learning and progression. Targets were created in partnership with families and children, giving children ownership of their learning. One parent commented, "Staff share my child's targets with me. I am given the opportunity to add my opinion. We then review these together and reflect on how they have got on." Achievements from both nursery and home were recognised and recorded, helping children develop a strong sense of accomplishment.

Children's progress was tracked across the core areas of the curriculum. Staff and management reviewed tracking information regularly to identify progress and to determine next steps. As a result, children were making positive progress. Observations captured children's interests and supported ongoing development. Some observations were shared with parents online; however, these could be more detailed and, for some children, more focused on individual learning rather than on group activities. Enhancing the quality of online observations would further support parents to feel involved and informed about their child's learning journey.

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.

Staff demonstrated a warm, kind and nurturing approach in their interactions with children. They knew each child well and were attentive to individual needs, offering comfort and reassurance whenever required. A child-centred approach was evident, particularly in how transitions were supported. These were tailored to suit each child's needs, and strong links with the local school further contributed to smooth, well planned transitions. Information was shared appropriately to ensure continuity, helping children feel safe and secure during times of change.

The environment provided cosy, calming spaces where children could rest and relax, helping them feel secure. Resources were available to support children with differentiated needs to regulate themselves. One parent noted, "The staff (past and present) have worked so hard to create a happy, safe, nurturing and inclusive environment for every child and family who come through the doors." The overall warm and welcoming atmosphere helped children feel cared for and supported.

Mealtimes offered a range of nutritious food, and children were encouraged to develop independence and life skills through tasks such as self-serving, pouring their own drinks, and helping clear the table. Children took turns taking responsibility for setting up, serving, and tidying after lunch. Mealtimes were calm, sociable, and unhurried, with plenty of conversation between children and staff. Staff sat with the children, supporting both safety and social interaction. We discussed with management the possibility of reviewing the lunchtime routine to provide children with even more opportunities for self-serving to further promote independence.

Personal plans were in place for all children, and contained the key information staff needed to meet their needs. Targets and developmental strategies had been identified for most children, and management agreed that this could be further strengthened for all children. Clear strategies were in place to support those with additional needs, and staff worked closely with families to ensure continuity of care. One parent shared, "My child is happy and thriving at this service and has been nurtured by staff past and present to achieve his full potential."

The service had a strong focus on promoting safety, and policies, procedures, and outdoor spaces had been adapted to reflect this commitment. Staff actively promoted safety with children, and demonstrated effective use of the Safe Inspect Monitor Observe Act (SIMOA) approach, a child safety campaign designed to protect young children. Children also participated in outdoor risk assessments, helping them develop an understanding of risk. Staff discussed safety throughout the day in ways that supported children's wellbeing without interrupting their play.

The service recognised the importance of positive relationships with families. One parent commented, "As a family, we feel incredibly lucky to have our child at St Luke's. The care, thoughtfulness, and genuine warmth of the staff shines through every day, and the experiences provided have helped our child thrive." Families were regularly invited into the setting for storytelling and mindfulness sessions. Plans were in place to further strengthen engagement, including developing home link activities focused on children's rights. This has the potential to deepen family involvement in the service.

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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