

McCready Family Centre Day Care of Children

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Barrhead
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 February 2026

Service provided by:
East Renfrewshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003372

Service no:
CS2006118246

About the service

McCready Family Centre is provided by East Renfrewshire Council and is situated in Barrhead. The accommodation offers two age-defined playrooms with access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas. The service provides care to a maximum of 47 children not yet attending primary school at any one time: 12 children aged 0 to under 2 years and 35 children aged 2 to under 4 years.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th February 2026. We gave inspection feedback to the management team on Wednesday 11th February.

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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with some of the children
- reviewed survey responses from 14 parents and 17 staff
- spoke with the manager and staff
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- 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

- The service had an established vision, values and aims that was clearly reflected in practice with a strong focus on children's rights.
- Children were engaged in play and having fun through a variety of meaningful and age-appropriate indoor and outdoor experiences.
- Planning and learning journals could be further developed to ensure these are meaningful.
- Staff knew children very well and children experienced warm and caring interactions.
- Strong relationships had been established with families, which resulted in positive outcomes for children.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation systems were in place; however, these required to be further embedded and formalised.

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

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 leadership team and staff across the setting engaged positively and professionally throughout the inspection process. They were keen to showcase effective practice and spoke confidently about their work and ongoing improvements. Staff welcomed professional dialogue and valued feedback, demonstrating openness, honesty, and a genuine commitment to reflection and continuous improvement for children and families.

The service's vision, values and aims were clearly established and embedded within daily practice. Staff consistently applied these values of nurture, love, safe, happy and healthy, contributing to a positive ethos and helping children feel safe, included and respected. The values were also shared with parents through digital apps, as well as through displays and posters within the nursery, ensuring families were informed and engaged with the setting's principles.

An improvement plan had been developed focusing on enhancing snack and lunchtime experiences, supporting children's speech, language and communication, strengthening family engagement and creating a sensory room. The service had made good progress in taking this forward. For example, visual supports were being used to promote communication, Bucket Time training had been implemented to support children's attention and engagement, and the sensory room had been successfully developed and was now in use, providing additional opportunities to meet children's individual sensory needs. As a result, the setting demonstrated a clear commitment to improvement planning, with identified priorities being actioned and leading to meaningful changes in practice.

The service had also identified self-evaluation using the new Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sector as a key improvement priority and had begun to use the framework to reflect on practice and identify areas for improvement. This was at the early stages and the management team acknowledged this and agreed they would continue to build on this work to ensure that self-evaluation is fully embedded.

Quality assurance processes were in place and a newly implemented monitoring overview had been developed. Some monitoring activities, including accident and incident reviews, were undertaken, and we discussed with the manager how these could be further strengthened to include head injury monitoring and how quality assurance processes could be more firmly embedded across the service (see area for improvement 1).

Regular team meetings were in place and supported clear, open communication across the service. These meetings provided valuable opportunities for professional dialogue, reflective practice, ongoing learning and collaborative planning. A structured approach was used, with meetings rotating between planning discussions, general operational matters and a specific focus on children's wellbeing and the sharing of relevant information. This ensured consistent communication and supported a coordinated approach to children's care and learning.

Staff were all registered with the SSSC. A corporate induction procedure was in place to support new staff and redeployed staff. Staff spoke positively of the mentor system and how this approach supported their induction into the service. We suggested the use of the national induction resource and reviewing the induction procedures to ensure it's reflective to the service and roles and responsibilities are clear for mentors.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience consistently high quality care and learning, the provider should implement formal process for monitoring of children's personal plans, planning and learning journals to support ongoing improvement. More clearly defined roles and responsibilities for quality assurance across the management team would strengthen accountability, improve consistency and enhanced the overall effectiveness of improvement processes.

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

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.

Children were observed to be happy, engaged and enjoying their play experiences alongside their peers. They confidently led their own play, with their right to play clearly embedded in practice. Staff were responsive to children's cues and interests, and interactions effectively supported children's individual ages and stages of development through meaningful play experiences.

A variety of opportunities were provided to support children's language, literacy and numeracy development. Babies engaged in singing using props from the song box and participated enthusiastically in action rhymes, supporting early communication and listening skills. Children explored the sand tray, developing sensory awareness and fine motor skills. The role-play area encouraged children to use their creativity and imagination while supporting the development of early problem-solving skills. Resources to support imaginative play included playdough, tea sets, role-play food, and real-life items such as tins and food boxes, which helped children explore everyday experiences and extend their learning through pretend play.

Children in the 2-3 playroom explored a numeracy activity with an underwater turtle theme, supporting recognition of numbers. Children engaged creatively at the art table, using crayons and pencils to express ideas, while others participated in story time and singing, developing listening, attention and social skills. Some children worked independently on jigsaws, enhancing problem-solving, concentration and fine motor skills. Small-world play included using cars on a tray with road markings, while others engaged in the mud kitchen, exploring fresh flowers. As a result, children experienced meaningful play that promoted learning, creativity, independence, and social development.

Responsive planning systems were in place, and children's experiences, interests and voices were captured using the digital platform Book Creator, with clear links to the national practice guidance Realising the Ambition. The management team and staff recognised that this approach was still at an early stage of development. We discussed the need for the service to continue refining and embedding planning processes to ensure they consistently demonstrate progression, depth of learning, and clear outcomes for children.

Children's individual journals on Seesaw were used to capture observations of experiences, achievements and activities. However, there were occasional delays in posts being shared with families due to approval processes. The manager was aware of this and confirmed that current procedures were under review to address the delay and enhance the timely sharing of children's learning with families. We also discussed how journals could be further individualised and more clearly linked to children's identified learning goals to better demonstrate progression and the impact of experiences.

All children had regular access to outdoor play, with the service making very good use of the outdoor space to extend learning opportunities. Designated areas for each playroom ensured experiences were developmentally appropriate, and a covered outdoor area for children aged 2-3 years enabled outdoor play in all weathers. Babies enjoyed exploring water and bubbles and playing in "coupe cars" whilst 2-3 year old children engaged in a variety of risk-beneficial play experiences that supported their physical development and coordination. They took part in an obstacle course, practising balancing, walking and jumping, and used climbing equipment such as a triangle frame and wooden boat to support their gross motor skills.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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**.

Daily routines were calm, relaxed and reflected children's individual needs and home routines. They were predictable, helping children feel secure and confident. Practitioners were attentive to children's verbal and non-verbal cues, responding sensitively to their individual "voice." Interactions were warm, nurturing and responsive, with children receiving reassurance, comfort and physical affection where appropriate. One parent commented "It is a very nurturing environment" and another shared "A wonderful nurturing and loving environment". Staff knew children well, speaking confidently about their personalities, interests and individual needs. As a result, children experienced a caring, respectful environment that promoted emotional security and wellbeing.

Mealtimes were calm, relaxed and unhurried. Staff sat with children, engaging in conversation, eating alongside them and modelling good eating habits while ensuring safety. Children in the baby room were supported to wash hands, pour drinks and feed themselves independently. Staff provided encouragement, offered support when needed and adapted utensils to support children's abilities. A variety of healthy foods, including fresh fruit, was offered. As a result children enjoyed positive mealtime experiences, developed independence and were supported to learn healthy eating habits.

Relationships with families were strong, respectful and meaningful which enriched children's experiences. Families were welcomed into the setting which supported children's sense of security and belonging. Staff valued these connections and strived to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment. One parent shared "The staff are so friendly and welcoming to both children and parents" and another commented "Always a warm and friendly welcome by all staff".

Staff and the management team valued and actively embraced family engagement opportunities, parents were invited to read stories in the setting, attended book bug sessions, numeracy workshops parents information evenings, coffee and chat sessions and opportunities to share children's learning and achievements. One parent shared "We are invited in all the time to participate in many different activities" and another commented "We have attended parents evenings as well as coffee and chats to discuss child's progress". This approach supported families to be included in their child's learning and development, while positively impacting on the quality of care for children.

Transitions into the service were carefully planned to support secure attachments. Home visits prior to children starting played a significant role in building early relationships and gathering significant information of children's individual needs. Transition packs including staff photographs and essential information helped children and families feel informed and reassured. Settling-in progress was shared with parents through a structured written summary, supporting confident adjustment, secure relationships and emotional wellbeing. Transitions between playrooms were also well planned, with key dates and detailed information shared between staff to maintain continuity of care and help children feel secure in new environments.

Rest and sleep routines were thoughtfully planned. In the baby room, children had a dedicated sleep area with cots, soft lighting and calming music. Staff followed children's individual routines and safe sleep practices, including regular checks and monitoring room conditions, and settled children with cuddles and songs to support a calm and reassuring environment. In the 2-3-year room, a quiet area with mats, blankets and comforters promoted rest, with staff providing comfort and reassurance as needed.

The service had been awarded the "Gold Rights Respecting School" status. A strong culture of respect for children's rights was evident, with staff consistently supporting choice, independence and dignity. Personal care routines were carried out respectfully and staff showed sensitivity by seeking children's permission before wiping noses or changing nappies, and by checking if children needed assistance. This practice ensured that children's choices were respected, their voices were heard, and their rights were upheld throughout daily routines.

Personal plans were in place that supported the staff team to meet children's needs. These gathered important information, such as routines, medical needs, dietary requirements, likes, dislikes, and emergency contacts. Children were further supported through personal learning goals agreed and reviewed with parents, wellbeing meetings, and additional support plans. One parent commented "Staff always consult regarding child's personal learning targets to ensure it is a collaborative discussion to ensure best needs of child are met". The service also worked closely with partner agencies, such as health visitors and family first organisation. As a result, children received consistent, personalised care and support, which promoted their wellbeing, development, and progress.

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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