

# Riverbrae Early Learning and Childcare Centre Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
4 March 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Renfrewshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003388

**Service no:**  
CS2003014788

## About the service

Riverbrae Early Learning and Childcare centre is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children aged two years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. Children attended on a full-time and part-time basis, and most children travel to and from the service by bus.

Riverbrae Early Learning and Childcare Centre is a purpose-built service located within the campus of Riverbrae School. Children have access to two playrooms, two secure outdoor play areas, soft play room, separate dining room and use of the school gym.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3rd and 4th March 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 people using the service
- Gathered feedback from three families through online questionnaires
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with visiting professionals

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 the 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**

- Strong leadership and staff collaboration improved outcomes for children.
- The service had established a culture of continuous improvement which enhanced the delivery of high quality practice.
- Children thrived through engaging play, creative experiences and responsive staff.
- The team should continue with plans to develop observations, assessments and tracking.
- Staff skills, knowledge and interactions enriched children's play and learning experiences.
- Children were nurtured, respected, and supported to achieve positive outcomes.
- Effective personal planning and transitions supported children's wellbeing.

**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	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 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.

The service had experienced a further period of change since our last inspection. A new head teacher and depute for the nursery had been successfully recruited. We found that the newly established senior leadership team, and staff demonstrated a strong and sustained commitment to driving improvement and securing positive outcomes for children and their families. Effective communication between the senior leadership team, staff and the wider school community was having a positive impact of the delivery of high-quality practice in the nursery. Regular meetings, professional discussions, and protected time supported ongoing reflection, collaboration, and improvements in the environment, learning and assessments processes to create the "Riverbrae way."

Staff practice was underpinned by a strong commitment to children's rights, inclusion, and the nurture principles. The service was at the early stages of reviewing its shared vision, values and aims across the nursery and school community. We found clear plans were in place to meaningfully involve children, families, staff, and key stakeholders in shaping these. The head teacher acknowledged the value of revisiting the vision, values, and aims of the service to ensure children and their families currently attending felt connected and actively involved in shaping the service.

A strong culture of self evaluation had emerged since our previous inspection. Staff have begun to use the Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare indicators and challenge questions "What do we do? How do we know? What are we going to do next?" This afforded the team the opportunity to celebrate their strengths and highlight areas for development that were meaningful to the nursery. The team should continue to embed this reflective cycle to sustain continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children and their families. We suggested the senior leadership team and staff should ensure evidence gathered, which informs both short- and long-term actions, clearly identified the impact and outcomes.

Capacity and pace for change were evident. The new head teacher and senior leadership team had created an ambitious improvement plan, demonstrating high aspirations for the quality of children's experiences and for staff wellbeing. The head teacher had successfully established conditions where all staff felt valued, listened to, and able to contribute to the service's improvement journey. The improvement plan was shared widely across the nursery and school community, and working groups were introduced to promote a collaborative and inclusive approach. Staff reported that improvements were "done with them, rather than to them," indicating a positive culture that fostered shared responsibility.

Quality assurance systems were now robust, effective, and completed timely, following a quality assurance calendar. The senior leadership team had clearly defined roles and responsibilities which enabled them to establish processes which set standards and expectations. Monitoring, auditing, and emerging moderation activities identified both strengths and areas for development. Importantly, where gaps were identified, actions were taken promptly to improve outcomes for children.

All staff were appropriately registered with the regulatory body, Scottish Social Service Council and adhered to professional codes of practice. Staff had engaged in relevant training to support their ongoing professional learning and development. The senior leadership team recognised staff's skills and actively supported them to share their knowledge, and expertise with other early years establishments through dedicated coaching and mentoring sessions.

The ethos within the setting was very positive. Staff described feeling optimistic about the direction of change and were motivated to embed and sustain improvements. Health and wellbeing remained a clear priority for the nursery and wider school community. Wellbeing check-ins, team meetings, and room meetings enable staff to reflect collectively on practice, knowledge, and skills. This supportive culture was contributing to high quality outcomes for children and strengthening team cohesion.

## Children play and learn 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Playing, learning, and developing.

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 demonstrated high levels of engagement, curiosity, and enjoyment as they explored the wide range of resources and provocations available both indoors and outdoors. We observed children engage in interactive stories, malleable play with playdough, active play on small climbing equipment, stacking and building with block play. We noted the positive impact on children's play and learning due to the changes to provocations and the environments. Staff were mindful to refresh and reset areas across the day to maintain children's interest and curiosities.

Schematic play opportunities were evident across all playrooms and were appropriately matched to children's stages of development. Staff demonstrated strong pedagogical understanding by sensitively extending children's play through experiences such as rolling, trajectory and stacking. These rich learning opportunities effectively supported children's cognitive development and growth in a fun, stimulating, and purposeful way.

There was an effective balance between child led and adult initiated experiences. Staff were responsive to children's interests and used these as starting points to introduce new challenges, extend thinking and spark curiosity. Interactions were purposeful and supported children to lead their own learning.

Opportunities to develop early language, literacy and numeracy were well embedded across the playrooms. Children accessed a variety of open ended and sensory resources, books, songs, digital technology, and environmental print. The freedom to transport materials around the playroom enabled children to deepen their play, develop independence, and follow their emerging interests.

Staff were caring, responsive, respectful, and nurturing in their interactions. They engaged at children's level to support communication, thinking and sustained play. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of child development and were skilled in adapting their practice to meet individual needs. They responded effectively to children's verbal and non-verbal cues, using a variety of approaches and communication aids, such as Makaton signs and board maker symbols, to ensure all children were included in play and learning experience.

Children had opportunities to engage in risk beneficial play, such as soft play experiences indoors, and outdoors using large loose parts and climbing equipment. These opportunities supported confidence, resilience, and physical development. The team highlighted some of the challenges of accessing the outdoor spaces for children using walking aids due to the gradient in the playground. The senior leadership team agreed to review access to other enclosed gardens in the school grounds to support all children to meaningfully engaged in outdoor play daily.

The team met regularly to review their developing planning and recording approaches, ensuring these remained children centred and responsive to current interests. "My Riverbrae Adventures" had been developed to record children's individual learning journeys, and large floorbooks were used to capture responsive play experiences. We found information was recorded but did not consistently include clear evaluations of learning outcomes, skills development, or children's achievements. Trackers were completed periodically to note progression, and learning walls were used to highlight some experiences on offer each week. Moving forward, the team, in collaboration with the senior leadership team, should streamline processes to ensure they clearly capture children's individual learning, progressions and next steps linked to personal plans. This will support staff to ensure planning continues to support breadth, depth and challenge across the curriculum and align with national guidance.

## 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.

Staff demonstrated a strong and well embedded understanding of the nurture principles, which were evident throughout their daily interactions with children and each other. Children's wellbeing was consistently supported through warm, responsive, and compassionate relationships. This nurturing approach helped children feel secure, valued, and ready to engage in play and learning, contributing positively to their overall health, wellbeing, and development. One parent told us, "The care is amazing in the nursery." Parents described staff as "friendly" "caring" and "helpful."

Care routines were flexible and tailored to children's individual preferences and needs, including sleep and personal care. Individual sleep mats and blankets were available for child should they be required. Staff provided safe and sensitive care, guided by children's wishes and parental requests, ensuring children's right were respected. Staff had reflected on the environment within the nursery and created diverse spaces to enable children to play, explore and rest. This approach ensured children's health and emotional wellbeing needs were consistently met. One parent told us "Staff are friendly and caring. They go above and beyond for my child."

Children experienced mealtimes that were calm, unhurried, and sociable. Staff used these daily routines effectively to build relationships, and support children's life skills and independence. Staff promoted children's involvement by encouraging children make choices on their meals using visual aids, was their hands and faces before and after meals and to eat independently at the table, when appropriate. Meals were nutritious, culturally appropriate and aligned with Setting the Table guidance. One parent told us, "The nursery offers a good range of different healthy foods." Water was readily available throughout the day to ensure children remained hydrated.

The team demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of transitions and the impact these may have on children and their families. Transitions were planned in a child centred and responsive way, reflecting the individual and evolving needs of children. Staff undertook home visits and visits to other childcare settings to build relationships and gather information that supported smooth, well-informed transitions. The nursery valued multiagency collaboration, which supported a holistic approach to getting it right for each child, particularly when needs changed over time. This ensured children felt safe, secure, and well prepared for change.

Children's wellbeing was well supported through meaningful and effective personal planning. Plans reflected a rights respecting, strengths-based approach to care, play and learning. "Transition passports" and "This is me" documents captured what mattered to each child, their interests and the strategies that supported them. Health and medication needs were clearly identified, monitored, and managed in line with current good practice. SHANARRI wellbeing indicators were embedded throughout personal plans, with strategies shared across the team to promote consistency and continuity in care.

Children's wellbeing plans were incorporated into personal plans with targets and strategies shared and continuously reviewed at multiagency meetings. Staff from the nursery were now offering coaching and modelling sessions within other establishments to support consistency and continuity in children's care. Staff shared their knowledge, skills, and practice to enhance an effective, consistent, and holistic approach to supporting children with additional support needs.

The team placed a strong emphasis on building positive, trusting relationships with families and worked hard to create a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment. Staff were committed to strengthening family engagement, recognising the important role this plays in enhancing children's experiences and outcomes. A range of effective communication systems supported ongoing partnership working. Online learning journals were used daily to share information and minimise barriers for families, including those whose children travel to and from the setting. Parents' evenings provided meaningful opportunities for families to meet with key workers, discuss children's progress, and celebrate achievements. In addition, stay and play sessions enabled families to participate in their children's nursery experiences, further strengthening connections and fostering a sense of belonging within the nursery community. One parent told us "There is a pleasant atmosphere. We feel a positive energy." Another parent told us, "I am always welcomed as a parent at the nursery."

## 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

To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the provider should implement robust quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, covering key areas of practice. This should include, but not be limited to, children's personal plans, children's play and learning experiences and staff 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), and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Quality assurance systems were now robust, effective, and completed timely, following a quality assurance calendar. The senior leadership team had clearly defined roles and responsibilities which enabled them to establish processes which set standards and expectations. Monitoring, auditing, and emerging moderation activities identified both strengths and areas for development. Importantly, where gaps were identified, actions were taken promptly to improve outcomes for children.

**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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very 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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