

# Garelochhead Primary Early Learning and Childcare Day Care of Children

Garelochhead Primary School  
Feorlin Way  
Garelochhead  
Helensburgh  
G84 0DG

Telephone: 01436810322

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 November 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Argyll and Bute Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003373

**Service no:**  
CS2023000016

## About the service

Garelochhead Primary Early Learning and Childcare was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 22 January 2023. The service may provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children not yet attending primary school at any one time

- no more than 0 are aged under 2 years;
- no more than 5 are aged 2 years to under 3 years and;
- no more than 35 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

The nursery is located in the town of Garelochhead, Argyll and Bute. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities. Children are accommodated in one large indoor playroom and an enclosed outdoor play space. Children also access additional outdoor spaces within the grounds of the primary school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26th and 27th November. 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 and two of their family members.
- Gathered feedback from four families through online questionnaires
- Spoke with three staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with visiting professionals

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing care from a responsive staffing team which helped them feel happy, secure and safe.
- Planning, observations and tracking of children's play and learning were at the early stages of being embedded in the team.
- Children were having fun and exploring the resources available in the environment on the days of inspection.
- The manager, in partnership with staff, should continue to develop quality assurance and tracking processes to support sustained improvements in the service.
- Staff promoted a positive team ethos and were respectful in their interactions with each other, the children and their 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

On both days of inspection, we observed children were happy, confident, and having fun. They experienced warm, nurturing, and responsive care from staff which helped them to feel welcomed and secure in the setting. One child told us "I like my teachers."

Children's emotional wellbeing was promoted by kind, sensitive interactions from staff. We observed praise, cuddles and reassurance from staff which meant attachments and relationships were strong, resulting in children feeling safe, and secure in the service. Children's voices and feelings were acknowledged and responded to appropriately by staff. This enabled children to express themselves in a caring and supportive environment. One parent told us "My child has grown so much in confidence and loves attending nursery."

Staff knew children well and could tell us about their individual likes, dislikes, and current interests. Children's personal plans contained relevant core information about individual health, welfare, and safety needs. The service communicated effectively with parents through daily conversations at collection times to ensure they had the most up to date information. One parent told us "Staff really care about the children and take time to speak to us daily". The team should now focus on streamlining information gathered to ensure that clearly identify strategies to support children's health, welfare and safety needs are linked to their next steps in play and learning.

The team had recently focused on improving the mealtime experience and could recognise the routine as a rich opportunity to promote close attachments and healthy eating habits. We found children enjoyed mealtimes that were relaxed, unhurried and sociable. Children were encouraged to be independent by self-serving their food and drink choices. Food choices were nutritious, and water was available to ensure children remained hydrated across the day. We made some suggestions on how to further develop the mealtime for children such as softening the routine at the end of mealtimes for children who had finished eating.

Children experienced sensitive and caring interactions when receiving support for their individual personal care needs which nurtured their security and positive attachments with staff. Staff could access appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by a clear administration of medication policy and procedures. The service was storing medication appropriately. We sampled medication consent forms and health plans and found these were in line with current best practice guidance. We asked the manager to monitor medication to ensure all information required was easily accessible, in the event of an emergency.

Children's health, wellbeing and safety was protected by a clear and concise child protection policy and procedure. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They had recently attended child protection training and knew how to address any concerns appropriately.

### 1.3 Play and learning

We evaluated this quality indicator as adequate, where the strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Children were visibly happy, content and actively accessing activities on offer on the days of inspection. Children benefited from a variety of play-based learning opportunities within the nursery. We observed a balance of adult directed and freely chosen activities which supported children to develop some key skills in problem solving and mark making. For example, children had created a shop and had lots of fun making and selling things to staff and their friends on the days of inspection. We agreed with the team plan to continue to develop resources available each day to meet children's individual stages of development.

Schematic play opportunities were evident throughout the playroom. Staff were skilled at building on children's play to extended experiences in rolling, trajectory and stacking on the days of inspection. This supported children's brain development and learning at a level that was right for them.

Throughout the inspection we observed a range opportunities available to develop children's language, literacy, and numeracy. Staff read stories, sang songs, and were using some questioning skills to develop children's thinking and understanding. The team should continue to develop the depth of their knowledge and skills to successfully scaffold all children's play and learning in the nursery.

Planning approaches were currently being reviewed and developed by the team. This was still in the early stages. The focus of the planned changes was to ensure a clear child centred approach was embedded into the nursery with a balance of intentional and responsive play and learning experiences. The manager, in partnership with staff, should continue to embed, sustain, and evaluate the planning process to ensure high quality experiences for children in their care. We agreed with the service's plans to continue to develop and embed their new processes for planning, observing, and tracking children's progression in learning at the nursery. (see area for improvement 1).

#### Areas for improvement

1. To support children to achieve their full potential the manager, in collaboration with the team, should develop the planning, observing and tracking of children's development to inform purposeful and meaningful play and learning experiences in the setting.

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).

#### How good is our setting?

**4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Children experienced an environment that was clean, warm, and welcoming. The room had natural light and was well ventilated with open windows and doors. Low lighting and soft furnishings helped the space to have a homely and calm atmosphere that enabled children to feel comfortable and secure in the setting.

The team were continuing to develop the indoor and outdoor spaces through consultations with children and utilising environmental audit tools.

Children could lead their play as they could easily access toys and equipment at their level in shelves, and baskets. Natural, opened ended materials were available on the days of inspection, sparking children's curiosity & creativity. Children had access to a variety of real objects in the playrooms such as clothing, brushes, bags, and mirrors in the dress up area which encouraged their imaginative play. We suggested the team extend their loose parts and block play resources to empower children to play together and extend their learning without adult involvement.

Free flow access between the indoor playroom and enclosed outdoor garden supported children's abilities to lead their play and support their health and wellbeing. The outdoor area provided children the opportunity to engage in risk beneficial play, as well as active and explorative play which further enhanced the range of play and learning experiences available. One parent told us "My child loves the nursery garden, exploring different textures, using resources to make their own creations and getting messy."

Risk assessments were in place within the setting. Mitigation measures were well considered and realistic. Monitoring and supervision had been established in the nursery to ensure children were always accounted for. Busier times of the day such as parent drop off and pick up times were planned to ensure children remained safe and secure in the environment. There was a secure entry system in place which was monitored by staff, this supported children's safety when attending the nursery.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place, in line with current best practice guidelines. Children and staff were confident in effective hand washing procedures. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was available and stored appropriately. Cleaning arrangements were established which reduced the spread of infection and protected children's health.

Accident and incidents were appropriately recorded and shared with families. We requested the team now conduct regular audits to identify any areas of potential risk and any changes required to support a safe environment for children.

## How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as adequate, where the strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

We found the manager and team engaged well during the inspection process, taking on advice and support, demonstrating a commitment for improvement. The service had experienced changes in leadership and staffing since registration, which meant professional relationships were still forming in the nursery. The setting was led by the Head Teacher of the primary school, who was building their knowledge and confidence in their new role of an early learning and childcare leader. The team acknowledged the benefit of the input and support received from the cluster lead from the local authority in driving improvements in the setting.

The team valued the strong relationships they had made with children and their families. Parents and family members were welcomed into the setting every day. One parent told us "There has been lots of events where we have been invited to share experiences with our children within the nursery." We saw meaningful conversations happen at transition times for children. Effective communication ensured families felt connected to their child's nursery.

Regular consultation through questions of the month, parent's meetings, and stay and play sessions ensured parents felt part of the service improvement plans. One parent told us "The nursery invites parents to discuss learning opportunities and policies."

The culture of self-evaluation and improvements were at an early stage and had resulted in some changes that had positively impacted outcomes for children and their families, such as the environment. The team now met with the manager on a more frequent basis to reflect on achievements and areas for further development. However, self-evaluation and improvement planning require to be further embedded to ensure all areas and actions highlighted are fully implemented and sustained. (see area for improvement 1).

During the inspection feedback, we discussed internal quality assurance processes that had been undertaken. We considered the importance of creating a clear action plan and measuring outcomes of any inputs. This is to ensure management are effectively supporting the improvements of service delivery whilst being mindful of staff's wellbeing.

The manager of the setting was also the head teacher of Garelochhead Primary school. This restricted the amount of time they could spend in the nursery. As a result, there was limited capacity to support a programme of continuous improvement. The manager, with support from the service provider, should look at the time available to complete managerial responsibilities for the nursery. The manager should have focused time where they can review, assess, audit, and monitor processes and procedures within the nursery. This will ensure improvements already achieved are sustained and progress is made on areas highlighted during this inspection and any internal quality assurance visits. (see area for improvement 2 ).

### Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the manager in partnership with the team, should continue to embed robust quality assurance and self-evaluation processes. This should include, but not be limited to, auditing medication, accident and incidents and undertaking observations of children's engagement and staff practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

2. The provider must ensure that the registered manager of the service has sufficient support to continue to develop their capacity, and has agreed dedicated time and skills to support a programme of continuous improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having a robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19).

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Staff engaged well in the inspection process. They were open and honest during discussions. The team acknowledged the challenges of the past, in terms of impacts on children, their families, and the wellbeing of all staff. However, we found they were committed to making improvements to support children to reach their full potential at the nursery.

Children were supported in a nursery that was appropriately staffed to meet their individual care needs. We found staff were deployed effectively throughout the indoor playroom and enclosed outdoor garden which supported high levels of interactions and promoted the wellbeing and safety of children. Continuity of care and effective communication between the team minimised the impact of staff breaks on children during their time at the nursery.

Children experienced warmth, care and compassion from staff which enabled them to feel valued and loved at the nursery. Effective teamwork fostered a welcoming atmosphere as staff were courteous and respectful in their engagement with children, their families and each other. Parents told us "Staff are very welcoming and happy," and "The staff are really approachable and understanding."

Staff had attended a variety of training to support their learning, development, and practice. We could see the impact of training emerging in the environment, interactions and play experiences offered to children. We would encourage the team to continue to reflect on their practice and continuous professional development to support positive outcomes for children and their families.

All members of the team were registered appropriately with the Scottish Social Services Council or General Teaching Council Scotland.

## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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