

Lawthorn Primary School Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

Lochlibo Road
Lawthorn
Irvine
KA11 2AY

Telephone: 01294 224 548

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 March 2025

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003017307

About the service

Lawthorn Primary School Nursery Class is attached to Lawthorn Primary School and is located in Irvine, North Ayrshire. The service is provided by North Ayrshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a daycare of children's service for a maximum of 34 children aged from three years old to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection, 30 children were registered with the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 12 and 13 March 2025. 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
- reviewed feedback from five parents and carers whose children attend the service
- spoke with the leadership team all staff
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, kind and caring interactions which supported their wellbeing,
- Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their own play.
- Children were well supported to develop their understanding of how to identify and manage risks in different situations.
- Staff leaders had high aspirations for all children and demonstrated a commitment to making positive changes for children and families.
- Involvement of staff, children and families in self-evaluation processes could be enhanced further to secure positive outcomes for children.
- Children were supported by the right number of staff to meet their needs.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall evaluation of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children's care routines were delivered with kindness and compassion from staff who were warm, nurturing and caring towards children. Interactions were responsive and engaging. This supported children to feel secure, and contributed to the positive relationships they had with staff. Families agreed they had a strong connection with staff, comments made included, "The staff have a wonderful way with the children" and "Staff are very nurturing towards the children."

Staff knew children well and confidently described their individual needs which meant they were able to respond to their preferences. Staff were respectful and applied nurture approaches to support children's wellbeing, understand and respond to individual behaviours and create an environment where positive relationships were at the heart of the service. This supported an inclusive ethos throughout the service.

Fostering and maintaining partnerships with families were important to the service. Parents and carers were invited into the service for events throughout the year. This included a Ceilidh, book bug and for stay and play sessions. This enabled families to feel included within the service.

Personal Plans were in place for all children and were developed in partnership with families and were reviewed regularly. All parents agreed they were fully involved in developing and reviewing their child's personal plan. Personal plans should now be further developed to outline how staff planned for children's individual needs and to include any support strategies. This will ensure all children receive the right support at the right time.

Children experienced mealtimes within the nursery setting and the school dining hall. Whilst visiting the dining hall was beneficial to aid children's transition to school, we observed that mealtimes could be further improved. When attending the dining hall staff were focused on tasks which meant they were not always immediately available to respond to some children's requests for support. On the second day of our inspection, children ate lunch within a multi purpose room located within the nursery. We found this to be a more relaxing and sociable experience for children. Lunch arrangements should continue to be monitored to ensure children consistently experience a nurturing mealtime which encourages their involvement in the planning and preparation of foods and supports independence and life skills.

Staff were confident about child protection procedures. They attended training and annual in-house updates to ensure they were confident with their responsibilities should they be required to report any concerns. Chronologies were in place, and updated as required. We observed staff support children through skilful conversations and play experiences to understand their right to privacy. This helped to protect and safeguard children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Direct access to the garden meant children benefitted from free-flow opportunities between the indoors and outdoors, enabling them to direct their own play. Resources were easily accessible and developmentally appropriate. Staff respected children's choices and asked permission to join children in their play. As a result, children were happy, settled, and confident within their environment.

Outdoor play offered opportunities for children to have the freedom and space to run and to join in risky enabling play. The layout of the outdoor space supported children's physical skills and enhanced their creativity and imaginative play. Children used loose parts which are play items with no pre-determined outcome, to build an obstacle course whilst negotiating spaces and agreeing safety measures. As a result, children were having fun and developing their confidence outdoors.

Some spaces offered interesting and exciting play materials and resources. For example, children enjoyed chopping and grating vegetables and using their imagination to re-enact experiences from home. Staff had identified that there was scope to enhance the resources within some areas of the setting to provide more challenge and extend children's learning. Following team training, they had made some improvements prior to this inspection. Children would now benefit from more planned provocations that sparked their interests and enabled them to explore, discover, solve problems and consolidate learning through play. This will help staff to scaffold and extend children's learning.

There were differences in staff confidence and skills with the planning processes and how information was recorded. Systems focused closely on children's skill development in Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Planning processes could be enhanced further by recording more clearly where children's ideas and interests have informed play and learning. For example, children told us about a planned outing using public transport, and staff shared this was initiated from a child's interest in trains. The service used floor books to record children's ideas and wishes, however, they had not been completed for this academic term. Staff should ensure planning systems are consistently completed to ensure children's voices are captured through play.

Effective tracking systems and targeted interventions such as ICAN speech and language assessments and phonological awareness sessions supported children's communication skills and demonstrated children's progress over time. We sampled the data available which demonstrated all children were progressing well.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery had its own separate entrance from the school, with a secure buzzer entry system. Staff used registers to track children's attendance and updated numbers of children on a noticeboard throughout the day. This ensured children's safety.

Children had their own dedicated cloakroom space to keep personal items and attractive displays were used to share information with families. Families spoke positively of feeling welcomed within the service, commenting "We are always welcomed and staff willing to answer any questions." Children's artwork and photos were displayed throughout the service, demonstrating to them that they matter.

The nursery environment enhanced play and learning opportunities as the spaces were well-considered, furnished to a high standard and comfortable. Children's language and literacy skills were supported as they independently engaged in mark making and enjoyed reading stories with staff. Opportunities for numeracy were naturally woven into children's play and learning experiences. For example, during play interactions staff supported children to count and make patterns. Children told us they enjoyed nursery and playing with their friends.

Some parents told us that their child rarely had opportunities to rest, sleep or relax when they needed to. We found that the environment could be further developed to include more cosy spaces for rest, relaxation and self-regulation. This would enhance children's wellbeing.

Children were well supported by staff to recognise hazards through play. Discussions about safety were naturally embedded into play and learning. For example, children confidently talked about safety when using scissors and when building at height during block play. As a result, children were developing their confidence and knowledge about how to keep themselves safe.

Opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through use of the wider community. Outings to the local woodlands were planned and a group of children attended on a rotational basis, supported community connections. Good use was made of the school building to support children's gross motor development, balance and coordination. Children felt comfortable within the wider school environment which added to their sense of security and inclusion. One family told us, "The early years staff team at Lawthorn provide a safe, nurturing learning environment for my child. The early years children are made to feel part of the whole school community."

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The leadership team were professional, approachable and engaged well with the inspection process. They were receptive to feedback and demonstrated a commitment to making improvements to ensure good outcomes for children.

Vision, values and aims for the service were shared with families at enrolment to support them understand what to expect from their early learning experience. Staff and children modelled the values with key strengths observed as kindness and respect. The aim of working in partnership with parents, carers and the whole school community to maintain a positive environment led to the welcoming and supportive ethos.

Staff spoke positively about the support they received from the leadership team which consisted of a senior practitioner and head teacher. Staff placed value in the time to talk conversations and felt this helped them prioritise their learning needs. Formalised professional development review processes would now further strengthen team development, ensuring self-chosen areas to improve are taken forward. This would further contribute to all staff feel valued.

Parents were consulted annually on aspects of the service and had provided some positive feedback in 2024. A few families who provided us with feedback agreed that they and their child were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. However, the majority of families disagreed. We asked families

what could be better within the service and suggestions made included; improving the garden space and better communication. Examples shared included staff having to undertake cleaning tasks during pick up times which limits the quality of parent hand overs. The leadership team should consider this feedback as part of their monitoring arrangements and identify more regular and meaningful ways to seek the views of families using the service. This will ensure the aspirations and views of children and families are at the heart of service improvements.

An improvement plan was in place that clearly identified priorities that were relevant to the service. Some focus areas within the plan had been progressed, impacting on improved outcomes for children. For example staff had participated in environment training and the indoor playroom had been adapted to support child lead play. This demonstrated capacity to make informed changes within the staff team.

Documentation to support medication to be administered safely was not in line with current best practice. For example, although two staff members sign documentation to confirm medication is administered and the dosage given, there was no written record of this being shared with parents. This presented the opportunity for children to receive the wrong dosage when they leave the service. The leadership team should update their documentation templates and monitor staff recordings to ensure they are completed accurately. This will ensure children's medical needs can be met.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff Deployment

The service had recently undergone significant change to their model of operation, this included reduced opening times and changes within the staff team. The team confirmed that during this transition they had focused on building relationships with each other, children and their families and as a result, relationships had improved. Parents spoke positively of the support they had received. Comments made included; "The staff at Lawthorn are wonderfully supportive towards my child and family. I can't thank them enough for everything that they do" and "Staff have done a wonderful job transitioning children from the old model to the new model and my child settled into the new routine, this is testament to their dedication and hard work."

Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. This contributed to a caring and nurturing environment for children and families, who were warmly greeted on arrival at the setting. This supported positive transitions and created a welcoming ethos.

Overall, children were supported by the right number of staff to meet their needs. Effort was made to ensure where possible, familiar staff were supporting children. At the time of our inspection there was one staff absence. This position was covered by two different agency staff members over the two day inspection. Staff breaks were well planned around children's needs and the appointment of consistent lunch staff promoted continuity and consistency in children's care enabling positive relationships to be formed.

Staff were responsive to children's cues for assistance and moved flexibly throughout the play spaces to provide support, interaction, and engagement. Due to staff being deployed with one staff to each playroom zone, there were times when the needs of some individual children disrupted the play and learning

experiences of others. Staff told us "There are enough staff across the day to meet children's needs, however, this has been a struggle at times." The leadership team should continue to embed the processes in place to monitor the playroom environment at key times of day. This will ensure children's engagement with staff, and their learning experiences are consistently positive with reduced disruptions.

There was model distributed leadership throughout the service with staff having areas of responsibility, such as wellbeing and literacy champions. This supported staff to be responsible and accountable based on their skills and interests to make improvements within the service. This could be further strengthened by tracking the impact of interventions for children and families.

Staff in-service days and non-contact time was well planned to ensure staff could engage in professional learning either as a team or individually. Learning undertaken included, enabling environments and infection prevention and control. Staff would benefit from undertaking post training evaluations to support them to reflect on their learning and to identify how their professional development could positively impacted on children and families.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.