

# Easter Carmuir's Early Learning and Childcare Class Day Care of Children

Carmuir's Drive  
Camelon  
Falkirk  
FK1 4JG

Telephone: 01324 508 550

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
15 May 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Falkirk Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2004006884

**Service no:**  
CS2003043643

## About the service

Easter Carmuir's Early Learning and Childcare Class is part of Falkirk Council's provision of early learning and childcare. The service is registered to provide term-time care to a maximum of 48 children at any one time aged three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is located in Camelon on the same site as Easter Carmuir's Primary School. The accommodation had been extended and now comprises of a secure entrance leading directly into the cloakroom space. The cloakroom and children's toilets are centred between the two separate playrooms. A staff office and quiet room are located off one playroom through the door leading into the school. Children have access to a large, secure garden.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 of May 2025 between 8.45 and 16.45 and on 15 of May 2025 between 9.15 and 16.10. 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 information gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with 32 children and five of their family members
- spoke with 13 staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences and how they were supported with their care, play and routines
- reviewed feedback from three families using MS forms
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

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

- Staff were warm and kind in their interactions, which included offering comfort and reassurance and engaging with children in respectful and sensitive ways. At times, staff's tone of voice and non-verbal language appeared more task-oriented.
- Children experienced learning opportunities that promoted meaningful engagement, exploration and critical thinking.
- Following an incident of physical intervention, we found that the service was committed to fully address this practice to ensure an approach which respects children's rights was embedded.
- Each child had a personal plan, and staff understood the importance of reviewing it regularly and meaningfully with both children and their parents. Staff's collaborative work with other agencies meant that the children's needs were met.
- The management and staff demonstrated their strong commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure they continued to support children to reach their full potential.
- Staff were committed and dedicated to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as a team. They had worked together to plan their daily routines so that children enjoyed a smooth, consistent and positive experience.

## 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?	5 - Very 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 this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff demonstrated warmth and kindness in their interactions with children, which included offering comfort and reassurance and engaging with them in respectful and sensitive ways. This provided children with a sense of safety and as a result children were relaxed, confident and settled.

Some staff used an approach and tone of voice which were less supportive in order to encourage children to do a task, such as sitting down to eat their snack or wash their hands. Staff were very responsive to the suggestions we made. As a result, we saw more nurturing approaches to the interactions with children on the second day of the inspection.

Staff supported children with their personal care in a sensitive manner, effectively promoting children's dignity and privacy, while fostering children's independence and choice.

Staff recognised the importance of using daily routines as a rich opportunity to strengthen children's independence. Children were fully involved in the preparation of snacks, which offered a valuable opportunity to learn life skills. They experienced nutritious meals and were encouraged to be independent. As a result, almost all children had a positive and social experience. We discussed with staff the need to be aware of where they positioned themselves to offer the right support at the child's level during lunchtime.

Fresh water was available throughout the day. Staff carefully considered allergies and cultural preferences in the preparation of snacks and meals and were fully aware of choking hazards.

There was an instance in which practitioners used physical intervention to prevent a child from walking away from the table in order to avoid a potential choking incident. We discussed this incident with the staff and the leadership team and highlighted the importance of using more nurturing and sensitive strategies where possible. The team reflected on the impact of this incident on the child. The leadership team was proactive, and plans were put in place to increase staff's understanding and confidence in using appropriate and sensitive strategies to support children. (See area for improvement 1).

Children's changing needs were met and their choices were respected. Each child had a personal plan, and staff understood the importance of reviewing it regularly and meaningfully with both children and their parents. Children took pride in sharing these, discussing with us photos and the activities and experiences they enjoyed. This evidenced that children's individual needs were effectively supported by staff.

Staff actively established a good information sharing process with families. This included identifying tailored strategies, appropriate next steps and support from other professionals and agencies. This meant that children were receiving the type of care that was appropriate for them to achieve their potential. A parent echoed: 'it is very nice to see the teachers care for the children's needs'.

Staff worked with other agencies to ensure that children's needs were consistently met. They told us how impactful the close relationship with the speech and language team had been in equipping them with valuable tools and strategies to maximise their support. As a result, children benefitted from a culture of professional collaboration, which enabled them to communicate and express themselves.

Children received medication at the right time. This was supported by an effective medication system, which reflected best guidance. Where children had more complex medical needs, these were fully considered by both leaders and staff. As a result, children experienced care that was delivered in a safe and sensitive manner.

Staff recorded accidents and incidents appropriately and leaders understood the importance of auditing them monthly to identify any significant patterns or reoccurrence. As a result, children benefitted from an environment that actively promoted their health and wellbeing.

Both staff and leadership team were aware of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and knew how to record and share child protection concerns appropriately.

### **Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

Children were involved in leading their learning experiences. They had opportunities to experience adventurous play in the woods, imaginative play that promoted children's curiosity and creativity as well as problem solving and critical thinking skills. During the inspection, children engaged in activities such as water play outdoors, play with loose parts and natural elements, and swinging. Indoors, children built high constructions in the block play area, set up a barber shop in the home corner and experimented with playdough and paint. There was a sense of purpose and enjoyment, which meant children experienced learning opportunities that promoted meaningful engagement, exploration and critical thinking.

Children were given ownership of their play and encouraged to be independent. Staff supported them to lead their play and make choices at their own pace. This helped children to feel secure and empowered, fostering their independence and sense of self-confidence.

Children had good opportunities to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. These were woven into the play experiences both indoors and outdoors with real life resources and natural and opened-ended materials across the setting. We also saw good examples of staff supporting children's imaginative play, knowing when to engage and when to step back. As a result, children experienced exciting and fun activities. A parent commented: 'My child had a very special interest and when I mention that, the nursery always try and have some extra materials about it'.

Children's engagement in a variety of activities was evident in a floorbook which they had a clear ownership of. Children's voices and drawings told a story of how children's learning unfolded from their point of view. This meant children were effectively involved in the process. We asked staff to consider how to use the floorbook to revisit and consolidate learning further.

Planning was being reviewed by the whole team to support improved planned and spontaneous play experiences for children. Staff had identified the need to offer children more choice in the play experiences. This would extend and sustain children's interests as staff develop and implement new ways of planning play.

Children's engagement and achievements were celebrated within the setting. Staff included examples of learning opportunities and activities in the learning journals. The leadership team had identified the need to support staff in developing their confidence and understanding of how to record children's significant learning. We discussed developing more evaluative language to support high quality observations of the children at play. The leadership team agreed with our findings. Staff had engaged in reflection and practical exercises to ensure the observations captured the richness and depth of children's experiences. This was beginning to have a positive impact on children's development, progress and achievements. As a result, children were making good progress. General next steps for each child were identified and should gradually become more specific with the addition of a new way to monitor and track children's progress.

Families were meaningfully engaged in their child's play, learning and development at nursery. Bookbug, coffee morning and stay and play sessions as well as a food project helped to celebrate all the languages and cultures of the families attending the setting.

Staff posted regular updates, photos and stories on an online platform shared with parents.

The setting made good use of the community by visiting local parks, nearby shops, local attractions and the woods. This meant that children were developing meaningful connections to their environment, which strengthened their sense of belonging to their community.

## Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and promote their wellbeing, the leadership team should ensure staff use appropriate and sensitive strategies to de-escalate incidents. This is to make sure children's rights and choices are respected in order to deliver compassionate and responsive care.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19), 'I experience warmth, kindness and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting and caring for me' (HSCS 3.9), and 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

**How good is our setting?****5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths promoted positive outcomes for children and there were very few areas for improvement.

**Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities**

Overall, both settings indoors and outdoors were well furnished and comfortable, providing space, natural light and ventilation. This contributed to create a refreshing atmosphere. Children had ample space for their care, play and learning needs, giving a strong message that they mattered.

Indoor and outdoor areas were sensitively structured and took into account children's developmental needs. The layout of both playrooms ensured that all children could freely move around and enjoy some quiet spaces.

There were clearly defined areas in both playrooms for different activities. Indoors, wooden resources, sensory materials and loose parts made the environment an inviting yet calming space. A selection of loose parts, construction resources and active play equipment made the outdoor environment exciting for children to explore and develop their curiosity and imagination. The environment clearly reflected the children's needs and supported communication, sensory experiences and different languages. Visual aids, clues and timetables ensured children could participate in the daily activities and knew what to expect next.

Direct free flow access ensured all children enjoyed spending most of the day outdoors. Staff had a clear understanding of the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall health and wellbeing. This meant the children could engage in physical play and activities for uninterrupted periods of time for most of the day.

Children accessed high quality and accessible resources, which were placed at their level. The equipment was safe and well maintained and staff were prompt in removing and reporting any items that required repair or maintenance. The leadership team confirmed that a plan was in place to renovate and replace some equipment contributing to children's continued enjoyment.

Appropriate risk assessments promoted the safety of the children alongside daily visual checks of the premises. Children were involved in risk assessing in the environment and in the community. Staff were aware of the Care Inspectorate SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) campaign and told us children had brought the little mascot elephant Simoa on several outings in the woods to learn how to keep safe while enjoying risky play.

Staff were very attentive and alert to children's movements and respected the required ratios with a clear focus on how they could meet the children's needs. They carefully considered how to keep children safe throughout the day. For example, they developed routines and practices to make sure children were accounted for all the time. There was also an efficient system in place for dropping off and picking up children, with one member of staff monitoring the door and another one recording appropriate information. The premises and all the doors and gates were securely locked to minimise the risk of children leaving the setting unattended. This contributed to create an environment in which children could feel safe.

Robust infection prevention and control arrangements were in place, including ensuring that surfaces were clutter-free and hygienic. This helped minimise the risk of cross infection and supported children's health. Handwashing routines were effectively embedded in the daily activities, and we saw children washing their hands unprompted at key times throughout the day. Cleaning rotas were maintained to uphold high standards throughout the setting.

Sensitive information was securely stored and managed, ensuring children's privacy and confidentiality.

## 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 recently formed leadership and staff team embraced a culture of continuous improvement and promoted an inclusive ethos based on positive relationships and nurture. This resulted in a welcoming, warm and supportive environment for children and their families.

Leaders worked collaboratively with staff, children and their families to develop a strong, shared vision for the setting to secure quality outcomes for children. They supported staff to embed the values they identified into their everyday practice, so that this could reflect the high aspirations they had for children and their families.

The management and staff demonstrated their strong commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure they continued to support children to reach their full potential.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in the development of the service. Staff gathered the views of parents both informally and formally and there was scope to develop this further with the clear direction the leadership team identified for the improvement of the service.

Quality assurance systems were in place, including self-evaluation and an improvement plan. The leadership team developed an action plan to ensure that the quality of the service was monitored and assessed in a focused and meaningful way. Self-evaluation effectively highlighted what was hindering progress on the improvement priorities. The leadership team reflected on this and, as a result, recently changed their approach to self-evaluation by simplifying and reviewing the main priorities in consultation with staff. This was beginning to have an impact on the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes.

The leadership team had worked well to actively engage in the improvement journey, also by being visible and spending time with children and staff in the setting. This helped the leadership team to plan improvements informed by their direct observations of experiences, interactions and spaces. It also meant that the leadership team could identify how to support staff effectively and at a pace that was right for them. Time and consistency were needed to gradually embed the positive strategies, frameworks and protocols that have been identified to lead improvement and innovation in the setting.

Regular whole team meetings and development of roles enabled staff to take responsibility and be accountable for the quality of the setting. Staff had worked hard to develop their own auditing processes, and these had started to bring about positive changes in their practice.



Both the leadership and the staff team valued the chance to engage in professional dialogue with other settings and shared some examples. This included opportunities for staff to visit other settings and welcome them to theirs. Staff told us this enabled and empowered them to further reflect on how to enhance their practice by introducing new ideas and changes that would support children's development.

### How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths promoted positive outcomes for children and there were very few areas for improvement.

#### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were committed and dedicated to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as a team. They had worked together to plan their daily routines so that children enjoyed a smooth, consistent and positive experience.

The leadership team used the mix of skills, knowledge and strengths across the staff team to ensure consistency and continuity of care. This meant that the children's experiences throughout the day were positive, children were kept safe, and their needs were met throughout the full session.

Communication was a key strength of the service and staff were committed to ensure positive transitions and effective information sharing with families. A parent told us: 'They are always there if I want to talk about any concerns I have'. Staff spoke knowledgeably about children's individual needs and how they were being met. They also showed an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing, and extend their play experiences.

Staff breaks were well planned as the leadership team recognised the importance of a service that is appropriately staffed.

Staff were proactive and communicated well with each other with a clear focus on teamwork. They worked together to ensure effective supervision including busier times and showed flexibility when routines changed. As a result, children's play experiences, needs and choices were promoted at all times.

A few new staff had started over the last few months and leaders had been reviewing and developing their induction process as a result. There was a clear process for mentoring of new members of staff, who commented positively on their induction experience.

There were protocols in place to maximise attendance in the workplace, which contributed to help staff take ownership of their overall wellbeing. Support meetings and yearly appraisals with the leadership team meant that professional development was well supported. Staff identified their professional development goals for the year ahead with opportunities for review and reflection.

Staff told us they felt valued and respected by the leadership team: 'all senior management team are very nurturing and responsive to individual staff's needs'; 'They always motivate myself and my ideas, they give me advice but also listen'.

Staff clearly valued the opportunity to enhance their understanding of child development approaches, theories and strategies. They shared with us the positive impact that these training courses had on their practice and on their confidence, which showed their strong commitment to improve outcomes for children.

## 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

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