

# Shawhead Family Learning Centre

## Day Care of Children

Berwick Place  
Shawhead  
Coatbridge  
ML5 4NQ

Telephone: 01236 632 076

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
15 May 2025

**Service provided by:**  
North Lanarkshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000237

**Service no:**  
CS2003015410

## About the service

Shawhead Family Learning Centre is registered to provide care for a maximum of 61 children at any one time; of those 61 no more than six are aged under two years and no more than 15 are aged two years to under three years. At the time of inspection 48 children were registered to the service.

Care is provided from a single storey building, which is located within a quiet residential area of Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire. The service is situated close to shops, transport links and other amenities.

Children were cared for in three large playrooms. Children also had access to a block play room, quiet/sensory room, separate lunch room and secure gardens.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 and 14 May 2025 between 09:30 and 17:00. Feedback was provided to the service and the provider on 15 May 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.

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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and three of their family members
- reviewed electronic feedback from 12 parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with two visiting professionals.

## Key messages

- Staff knew children very well and responded to their individual needs and wishes.
- Strong relationships had been established with families, which resulted in positive outcomes for children.
- Children's health and wellbeing was enhanced through daily access to outdoor play.
- More toys and materials were needed to help children develop their curiosity, creativity and imagination.
- Some areas of the nursery would benefit from attention to décor and cleanliness.
- The provider should review nappy changing facilities and make necessary improvements.
- Management and staff had a clear vision for the development of the service and were passionate and committed to drive forward improvement.
- Staff worked together as a team and communicated well to ensure children's need were met.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
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

Children attending the service were happy, settled and secure. They were confident in their interactions with staff and each other. Staff used meaningful praise, chatting and singing with children as they supported them. This helped children feel valued and loved. When referring to staff one parent told us "the thing that comes across most, is they care." One child told us "I love [staff], they make me laugh and give me cuddles."

Children were supported with kind and nurturing approaches that supported their overall wellbeing. Staff took time to get to know children and their families, promoting positive relationships. This was supported through meaningful approaches, which included parental workshops, involving parents within transitions and daily interactions. Parents told us "I was welcomed with open arms to take the time my [child] needed to settle, I was also given support and reassurance when leaving my [child] as this was such a big step for both of us" and "I'm always greeted by staff and given an update and have always been able to discuss any questions I have about [my child's] care while at nursery."

Effective personal plans helped to ensure staff caring for children had a clear overview of their individual needs and preferences. Regular consultations and reviews with parents had taken place which enabled them to be fully involved in their child's care. Parents told us "I have regularly meetings with my [child's] key worker and also management to discuss [their] personal plan. They have always been on hand over the phone or when in nursery if I have any questions or need a wee update on how [they] are doing" and "they keep us regularly updated and are so accommodating. They absolutely meet [my child's] needs and go above and beyond to ensure [their] time at nursery is challenging and enjoyable."

Children that required additional support, received appropriate and timely support to meet their needs. Staff worked closely with external agencies. This helped ensure they had the right information and strategies in place to promote children's learning and development. External agencies spoke highly of the service and the collaborative working between staff and parents. They commented "[manager] and their team are very professional. They have children's best interest at the heart of their approach" and "they work in partnership with us to ensure they are getting it right for children, they want the best outcomes and work well with families to ensure consistency."

Children benefitted from relaxed, sociable and unhurried mealtimes. Staff were knowledgeable about children's routines and dietary needs. This included supporting younger children with their feeding routines, which helped to ensure their individual needs were met. Most children were involved in making their snack, this included opportunities to cut fruit and butter their own crackers. This helped to promote skills for life. Children chose when they wanted to come for snack, which supported their choices and minimised interruptions to their play. One child told us "we get to make snack all by ourselves."

Lunchtimes were provided from a separate playroom, where staff sat with children and engaged in meaningful conversation, which contributed toward language development and social skills. This also supported effective supervision.

Some opportunities for self serving were available, for example, self serving sides and pouring their water and milk. We discussed with the service where these opportunities could be further enhanced to further develop children's skills for life. For example, setting the table and self serving lunches.

Effective systems were in place that supported safe storage and administration of medication, this helped to ensure children's health needs were met. Medication was administered sensitively and safely in line with children's needs. We suggested some minor adjustments to help ensure all information was clearly recorded. An overview of all medication stored within the premises was kept and management regularly complete reviews and audits of medication inline with best practice.

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

Children were having fun as they participated in play opportunities and staff joined in with children supporting their play. They enjoyed playing hop scotch in the garden, running through the willow tunnel and creating structures with blocks. Children told us "I like the garden", "I can climb the trees, come and see" and "I like building with the blocks, I'm building a castle for my baby."

The pace of the day was relaxed and supported children to have long periods of uninterrupted play. This offered children opportunities to explore, build friendships and move freely between indoors and outdoors, supporting their overall wellbeing. One child told us "we can go in the garden whenever we want, our jackets are over there." However, we discussed where staff could further develop their approaches to ensure younger children's choice to play outdoors was recognised at all times. For example, ensuring younger children can communicate their wishes.

Staff provided a mixture of spontaneous and planned experiences for children to support their learning through play. Consideration had been given to some spaces within playrooms. Babies benefitted from a wide variety of natural and real materials to support their curiosity and discovery. Resources were easily accessible supporting them to lead their own play. They enjoyed exploring water and making discoveries about sounds they could make with metal object and musical toys. Staff supported them through repetition and commenting on what was happening. This helped them make connections in their brains and consolidate their learning.

Older children were directing their play choices through the materials and resources provided. At the time of inspection we found some spaces did not have enough resources to support child led play. Overall, some areas would benefit from further invitations to learning and provocations to support children's natural curiosity, creativity and imagination. We discussed where the range of resources could be increased to ensure they take account of all children's stages of development and learning. The leadership team and staff should continue to review children's play space and resources, ensuring play opportunities are stimulating and challenging, whilst also supporting children's interest and stage of development. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Play experiences provided opportunities to develop children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, staff read stories to children who joined in to repeat words and they sang with children. Children's numeracy skills were supported through staff interactions. Staff used mathematical language to support children when counting and measuring. The service should consider adding further resources both indoors and outdoors to enhance children's literacy and numeracy skills. For example, adding resources within house corner to encourage mark making.

Staff responded to children's ideas and actions and were beginning to adopt a questioning approach to support children's play and learning experiences. For example, children were encouraged to predict what might happen next when mixing different colours of paint together. Staff should continue to develop their skills and confidence in extending children's learning through meaningful conversations. To further support staff's understanding of how children learn and develop, the management team should continue to upskill staff through identified training and development opportunities.

Planning approaches for children were child centred, responsive to children's interest and recognised their stage of development. Staff spoke confidentially about how their observations of children, along with individual targets and children's views informed their planning. Staff used both intentional and responsive planning to support children's play. Floorbooks and mind maps reflected children's voice, ideas and suggestions. We discussed how this could be further enhanced to evidence the actions of these consultations.

Children's opportunities to play and learning were enhanced through connections within the community. The service had made good use of local space, using local parks, and community walks to support children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. One parent commented "they organise going on walks, small trips and experiencing new things to help aid their development."

## Areas for improvement

1. To support children's natural curiosity, choices and wishes, the provider should ensure children are provided with opportunities to consolidate their own learning through play and are sufficiently challenged in order to reach their full potential. This should include, but is not limited to, improving toys and materials to support spontaneous play.

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

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

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

Most play spaces were bright and well-ventilated. Children had a welcoming space to store their personal belongings helping them feel valued. Children could access their personal items when needed, for example, transitional objects from home. This helped to support their wellbeing.

The service benefitted from a range of rooms to support children's play and learning, this included a block play room, 'star room' and individual play rooms for each age group. The 'star room' had recently been developed and offered a warm, cosy, nurturing space that supported children's wellbeing. We discussed with the service how this could be further developed, providing further spaces for children to relax and self regulate. For example, developing cosier spaces indoors and outdoors for children.

Throughout the setting the use of soft furnishings and fairy lights helped create a homely feel to many areas. However, attention was needed to the décor as many walls were visibly dirty in some places due to wear and tear. In addition, some tables were old and worn making them difficult to clean. The service had plans to decorate the nursery over the summer and we agreed this would help improve the spaces.

Careful consideration had been given to the layout of the baby room, which offered a range of spaces for children to make choices, support their interest and develop their ideas. The freely chosen play opportunities allowed children to lead and direct their own learning. However, play environments for older children could be further improved to promote challenging, exciting and stimulating play. Whilst there was some loose parts, real life and open ended materials, these were not plentiful enough to support children's learning. We discussed how the range of resources should increase to ensure they take account of all children's stage of development and learning. (This has been reported within quality indicator 1.3, play and learning).

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted through daily opportunities to play outdoors, which also supported their physical skills. This included a climbing frame, trees for children to climb and cycling on bikes. Most children had opportunities to naturally move between the indoor and outdoor spaces supporting them to have access to fresh air everyday. Children were confident when accessing appropriate weather clothing and were supported to put on their jackets and shoes. We discussed where opportunities to move freely for younger children could be improved.

Whilst the service had a large outdoor space, we noted some areas were beginning to look tired and were in need of attention. For example, some piece of wooden equipment were needing replaced. Play spaces had limited resources, which restricted children's creativity, curiosity and imagination. We discussed where the outdoor area could be further enhanced to support and challenge children's exploration. This included developing spaces, toys and materials to ensure resources were easily accessible. The service should continue with their plans to review and develop their outdoor space.

There was a system in place to monitor the maintenance and repair of equipment. However, during the inspection we identified some areas where further maintenance would be beneficial. For example, exposed wire on an outdoor drain, unsuitable storage of materials and general maintenance of the building. We discussed the importance of children experiencing a safe and well-maintained environment. The service should continue to develop their approaches to support staff in identifying risk in the environment and are aware of the processes and procedures to report and action repairs. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Some measures were in place which helped to prevent the spread of infection. For example, staff wore gloves and aprons when changing children's nappies. However, we identified where improvements were needed to help improve infection control. For example, some areas of the service needed a deep clean. This included toilet areas and the removal of unnecessary items from toilets. Leaders had identified that the carpeted flooring in the changing area needed replaced with a wipeable material and this was included in the service's maintenance plan to be actioned by the provider. We agreed this would support infection and prevention controls. (See Area for Improvement 2).

At the time of the inspection we discovered the service did not have enough changing facilities for the number of children that required them. Whilst the service had developed approaches to ensure this was managed and children needs were met, we asked the provider to review this. (See Area for Improvement 3).

## Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure that children receive care in a safe, clean and well maintained premises. This should include, but is not limited to, improving approaches to risk assessments and ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place and improving the quality of fixtures and fittings.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard's (HSCS) That states: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.24).

2. To help ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing, the provider must improve infection prevention. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring general infection control practice is understood and implemented by all staff.

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

3. To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should make improvements to changing facilities for children to ensure sufficient facilities are available for the needs and number of children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed' (HSCS 5.4) and 'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes.' (HSCS 5.18)

## 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.

Leaders were passionate and committed in their role to help improve outcomes for children. Management and staff all worked together to ensure a positive ethos within the setting. Staff, management and families had created a shared vision of what was important in the setting. The vision, values and aims of the service were embedded in practice and reflective of children's experiences. The core values of children's rights, care and supporting children to achieve their full potential created a nurturing and respectful learning environment which valued children as individuals.

Quality assurance processes were in place to support the continuous improvement of the service. The improvement plan was targeted at key practice areas, including the development of spaces and upskilling staff through training approaches, which was inline with our inspection findings. Clearly defined outcomes and what success would look like, meant staff understood the role they would play in supporting improvements to children's care, play and learning. Staff were involved in reflecting on the progression within areas for improvement.



However, during the inspection we identified some environmental issues that the service had not identified. Whilst quality assurance processes were supporting a tailored approach to children's care, we identified where approaches could be further developed to support play experiences and the development of a clean, safe and secure environment, this also included some safety issues. This has been discussed within key question two 'How good is our setting.'

Managers valued the input of families and children in the development of the service. They sought out opportunities to involve families and welcomed them into the setting. This included wellbeing Friday walks in the community and a Solihull group to support parents understanding children's emotions. As a result, the manager and staff knew families well and were well placed to identify support that may be necessary to promote positive outcomes for children.

Information was displayed attractively throughout the service to ensure parents, staff and visitors felt included and valued. The improvement plan, information on parental and development groups and monitoring calendars were accessible to all in corridor areas. This added to the inclusive, welcoming environment, with all relevant information being transparent and openly available. Families were involved in developing the service and their views were sought via questionnaires. Parents told us "feedback is always welcome" and "our voice is always heard." We discussed where their suggestions could be documented and actioned. This would inform families that their views were valued and had an impact.

A programme of training was in place to support staff to develop their skills and knowledge of best practice guidance to support them in their role. Staff spoke about how training had influenced their practice and supported them in making changes to children experiences. For example, children rights, realising the ambition and block play training. This helped ensure staff practice was up-to-date and meaningfully supported children's needs and care. One staff member shared "training helps me look at things with a different view in mind. It has helped me to provide more quality learning experiences for children." We discussed where the service could continue to provide opportunities for staff to reflect and discuss best practice, to support and upskill staff.

All staff spoke positively about the manager and the management team. Their support and passion had led to staff feeling empowered, having increased confidence in their skills and abilities, sharing the passion for the improvement of the service and ensuring the best outcomes for children and families. Staff told us, "Since [manager] joined as our new manager, Shawhead FLC has flourished into a secure and positive environment. [They] have worked tirelessly to rebuild strong bonds between the staff and has collaborated with us to create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for both staff and children. [Their] leadership has played a key role in restoring and enhancing the positive environment we now enjoy" and "the SLT are outstanding within the nursery. They are all very approachable and ready to listen and offer support. [Manager] has a very caring and nurturing approach to everyone involved in the centre and has the wellbeing of everyone at the heart of everything [they] do."

### How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children benefitted from a nurturing, caring and dedicated staff team, who were focused on the needs of children attending the setting. Staff showed genuine care and interest in children's lives, development and learning. Children continually experienced supportive interactions, delivered with respect, warmth and kindness. This promoted positive relationships, attachments and children's comfort. Families told us they had a strong connection with staff. They told us "the staff have been absolutely fantastic, they all take the time to get to know children, even if they aren't in their room" and "the staff are so supportive, the confidence [my child] now has is amazing, I never could have dreamed [they] would have settled the way [they] have and it's down to the staff building a relationship with both of us."

Members of management and office staff welcomed children and families as they arrived at the service before being welcomed into the playroom by staff. Parent said, "I'm always greeted by staff and given an update and have always been able to discuss any questions I have about my [child's] care while at nursery" and "there's always someone to greet when [my child] arrives to help with that transition." This created a nurturing, positive and predictive environment for children in which they felt safe and secure.

Staffing levels and deployment of staff were managed effectively. This took account of the different experience, knowledge and skills of the staff team. Sufficient staff were in place to meet the needs of children and not just the number of children in attendance. We observed staff working flexibly to support each other if numbers or needs of children changed within areas. Children with additional support needs were supported well by staff throughout the day. This contributed to ensuring positive outcomes for children.

Staff understood that continuity of care was important for children and communicated well with each other when tasks took them away from their responsibilities. Staff worked well to ensure children were supervised throughout the day and there was minimal disruption to their play. For example, staff breaks and rotas were planned to maximise children's experiences. As a result, children experienced a very calm, nurturing experience.

Staff were warm, welcoming and engaged positively in the inspection process. It was evident through discussions they were committed and enthusiastic professionals. One parent told us "the staff at Shawhead go above and beyond. The kids are loved, nurtured, encouraged to learn things that interest them and they have an amazing environment to keep the kids safe. When you discuss your child they genuinely care."

New staff had benefitted from completion of an induction and were using 'The National Induction Resource' to reflect on their learning and evaluate their practice. Regular one-to-one meetings supported staff to reach their full potential. This contributed to a positive staff ethos, further supporting children to be settled and happy.

## 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	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate

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

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

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto: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.