

# Blairmore Early Learning Centre Day Care of Children

Blairmore Road  
Greenock  
PA15 3JS

Telephone: 01475 715 995

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 June 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Inverclyde Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000212

**Service no:**  
CS2003016340

## About the service

Blairmore Early Learning Centre is a day care of children service situated in the residential area of Greenock. The service is provided by Inverclyde Council.

The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 87 children at any one time as follows:

- No more than 15 are aged 2 to under 3.
- No more than 72 are aged 3 to those not yet attending primary school.

At the time of our inspection, 64 children were registered with the service, including 55 children aged 3-5 and 9 children aged 2-3.

On the first inspection day, 46 children aged 3-5 and 9 children aged 2-3 attended and 43 children aged 3-5 and 9 children aged 2-3 attended on the second day.

The service is close to transport routes and other local amenities. Children have access to an entrance area, designated playrooms, fully enclosed outside areas, children's toilets, and nappy changing facilities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 June 2025 between 9:30 and 17:00 and 19 June 2025 between 9:15 and 17:00. 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- received 15 completed questionnaires
- spoke with staff and the leadership team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

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, caring, and kind, and interactions were unhurried and responsive to the children's needs.
- Children were cared for in a nurturing environment where they were supported to develop their independence, skills, and abilities.
- Staff knew the children very well and responded to their individual needs and wishes.
- Mealtimes were a calm, organised, and positive experience for all children.
- Children were happy, settled and having fun playing and learning. They were given the time and space to make choices, directing their own play and learning.
- Play areas supported children's needs and interests and were inviting and stimulating.
- Quality assurance processes should continue to be developed to ensure measurable improvements across the service over time.
- Staff training supported professional development, leading to improved outcomes for children.

## 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?	5 - Very 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?

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm, kind and nurturing in their approach to children. As a result, children were confident and happy within the setting. They had formed close attachments with staff and their peers, which supported their emotional wellbeing and sense of security.

Staff knew the children well, and personal plans were in place for each child. They included the information staff needed to meet children's health and wellbeing needs. Plans were shared with families and reviewed regularly to ensure consistency in the care of children. One parent shared, "We have regular check-ins to review progress and discuss any goals". Another said, "I have been invited in on several occasions to discuss my child's care and development, and I am shown things they have been doing." This enabled senior leaders and staff to monitor and evaluate how effectively the strategies and targets set supported children's progress and outcomes.

Children were supported in undertaking personal care tasks independently, such as hand washing, brushing their teeth, and using the toilet. These activities helped children develop essential life skills and their self-esteem.

Staff were aware of nappy changing guidance and could access appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Personal care, such as nappy changing, was carried out sensitively, safeguarding children's privacy and dignity, which supported their emotional security and fostered positive relationships with staff.

Mealtimes were calm, organised, and a positive experience for all children. They enjoyed nutritious meals that met their allergies, preferences, and dietary needs. Staff engaged with children at the dining tables, which enhanced supervision and supported meaningful interactions, fostering quality engagement. Children had opportunities to practice and develop their independence skills. For example, they took turns pouring their drinks and responsibly cleared their dishes and food waste into the recycling bin and basins when they finished their meals. This approach encouraged them to be self-sufficient and develop a sense of responsibility.

Medication was stored out of children's reach, which kept them safe, and administration paperwork was regularly updated, ensuring accurate records to support children's health, wellbeing, and safety.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Playroom layouts allowed children to move around freely, supporting their right to play and have fun. Older children accessed all play areas, both indoors and outdoors, which enabled them to follow their interests and revisit their learning.

Child-initiated play included building cars using the crates and wheels, cause-and-effect exploration at the water trough, building with the blocks, and baking and cooking. These activities allowed children to problem-solve and develop deeper connections in their play and learning.

Staff were skilled at engaging with children's conversations and play situations to enhance their understanding and support their learning, which included knowing when to step back and let children discover things on their own and when adult support was needed. As a result, children's social skills, including their ability to interact and communicate, as well as negotiate and compromise in various play situations, supported them in sharing and building relationships with their peers.

Sensory materials, including sand, playdough, paint, and hands-on science experiences, stimulated children's creativity and imagination. One parent shared, "My child loves the water play areas and spends a lot of time making potions, etc." The service's plan to develop the woodwork area in the outdoor classroom would further support children's curiosity and creativity.

Children's literacy and numeracy development was promoted through structured and self-directed play. This included stories, SMART board activities, Vygotsky story grammar, and using clocks, spinning toys and timers to predict and learn about time. One staff member shared, "I have recently participated in maths training, which has given me more practical ideas to do with children". Parents said, "My child's has come a long way from starting in this nursery so I believe the staff have really helped with counting, sorting and the knowledge of different colours and shapes", and "My child has learned how to count to ten and is now learning the alphabet". This created a rich, language-and mathematical-filled environment that supported children's thinking skills, growth, and development.

Children made playdough and baked cakes independently, using visual aids and received adult support when needed. They used the oven and learned about safety boundaries when using the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA elephant as a guide. Staff promoted children's vocabulary and language during these experiences, using questions such as 'How many spoonful's do you need?' and 'What else do you need to add to get the consistency right?' These interactions expanded and consolidated children's early literacy and numeracy learning, helped them develop problem-solving skills, and supported their interests.

Staff used learning journals and floor books to document children's play experiences. These records were shared with families to keep them informed and engaged in their children's learning journey. One staff member shared, "We are on a journey using floorbooks for our planning. We have been recording our intentional and responsive learning, teaching, and evaluating, which helps staff coming next into the area and continues the learning and supports children's interests, such as where children need to be supported or challenged". Another commented, "I look at the child's trackers, seeing where they may need support developing, I also listen to a child's thoughts, likes, dislikes. I am responsive to children if they ask for recipes that are not readily available to them". Responsive and intentional planning for play and learning enabled staff to focus on children's individual needs and strengths and plan accordingly. This meaningful approach ensured children were supported and challenged in a way that was right for them.

The newly established early learning trackers from Inverclyde Council were designed to help staff assess children's progress, identify targeted interventions, and understand their interests to support their learning and development. Staff should ensure that their observations highlight children's learning styles and include tailored next steps for future learning experiences.

## How good is our setting?

## 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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children attended a welcoming and comfortable environment that was appropriately furnished and well-ventilated. Informative displays in the entrance areas fostered family engagement and involvement. Children had a designated personal space for their belongings, which contributed to their sense of security, emotional wellbeing, and inclusion within the setting.

The nursery was clean and well-maintained, and staff and children practised good hand hygiene. This minimised cross-contamination and reduced the potential risk of infections spreading.

Boundary fencing, gates, and a secure entry system ensured children's safety. Risk assessments were in place for some individual children, which supported their safety in the environment. All children managed their risks and made informed decisions about their safety, using the SIMOA elephant as a guide, which provided support as they played and learned.

A register and whiteboard were used to record children's attendance, ensuring their whereabouts were documented during their sessions and kept them safe. Staff could further strengthen the registration process by adding the times children attend to track their attendance patterns.

Accident and incident forms were completed and shared with families, and appropriate first aid was administered when needed. The forms were regularly audited, which helped identify common or recurring themes and the necessary actions to maintain children's wellbeing and safety.

A recent audit of the play environment for older children, both indoors and outdoors, ensured that their play needs were being met and identified areas for ongoing improvements. The indoor playrooms for all children had age-appropriate resources that supported children's play and learning. The service should continue its plan to develop the outdoor area for younger children. This development should include regular access and opportunities that promote children's natural curiosity and creativity.

Playrooms were inviting and equipped with materials that included informational books across various areas, supporting both mathematical concepts and creativity. They also featured real-life materials and environmental print to promote children's literacy development and essential life skills. One staff member shared, "We set up provocations to invite children over to help them develop their learning and to achieve their targets and areas are set up with different resources to allow children to make their own choices and self-select. I feel I am responsive to children's play and learning and will take it forward". The improvements to playrooms introduced new ideas, sparked curiosity, and created opportunities for children to explore, make decisions, and extend their learning.

**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**

Children were cared for in a service that had clear aims. For example, the values of a welcoming, friendly, and approachable learning community through high-quality learning and teaching experiences based on play and fun were included and recognised in practice. The planned learning events for families, such as the maths and literacy workshops, developed parents' existing skills and supported the learning between the setting and home.

Information about the service was shared with parents during the annual welcome meeting and included in the nursery handbook, which parents could refer to at any time. This communication ensured that parents understood the service's expectations and enabled them to participate in the nursery's events and activities, benefiting both the children and their families.

Policies were reviewed, updated, and aligned with current guidance and legislation to reflect changes in service delivery, ensuring the safety of children and a shared understanding of expectations among staff.

Families were meaningfully involved in the development of the service, including daily chats, stay-and-play sessions and questionnaires to gather their views. One parent shared, "I am part of the parent Council, so it's good to help out". Others shared, "The nursery involves the parents in as much as possible, from stay and play to asking for our input on things" and "The nursery always asks for parents' opinions and if they feel that the nursery could do anything better regarding their child". As a result, families felt valued, respected and included.

A quality assurance calendar helped senior leaders by enhancing good practices, staff support, and supervision, which boosted staff confidence and improved play experiences. They should continue monitoring children's learning trackers to ensure an accurate overview of progress, with observations that effectively support development and identify the next steps in learning.

Senior leaders and staff met the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection, which included upskilling staff and developing the environment to support responsive play and children's interests. As a result of these focused areas, some of the priorities the service had planned, such as embedding the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHs) programme and the woodwork programme for children to gain new skills by using a range of tools to stimulate their imagination and encourage creativity, were paused and not yet been effectively integrated into practice and have an impact.

Senior leaders and staff should continue to implement and embed the service improvement plan by engaging in ongoing self-evaluation processes, participating in refresher training opportunities, and conducting regular audits of their practices to ensure ongoing success. This approach would ensure that all identified priorities remain relevant and manageable. Additionally, they should continue to involve families and children in this process to keep them informed about the setting's progress and goals.

Senior leaders demonstrated openness to feedback and actively participated in the inspection process. Together with the improvements made since the last inspection, they demonstrated commitment and capacity for growth, resulting in improved outcomes for children.

## 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

Since the last inspection, there have been changes in the staff team, resulting in some staff members having been employed at the service for several years while others recently joined. The routine of accessing Inverclyde Council's peripatetic staff provided some consistency in practice across the staff team, and senior leaders being visible in the playrooms to cover staff absence and oversee staff practice contributed to the quality of care provided.

Staff communicated and worked together well throughout the day to care for the children. They had a diverse range of skills, knowledge, and expertise and were passionate, confident, and happy at work. Staff told us they felt supported by both their colleagues and senior leaders, and they received support, guidance, and professional development opportunities. One shared, "Over the last year, we've worked hard to better our practice and get it right for every child. We are constantly evaluating our work and changing things that need to be changed in conjunction with new policies and frameworks, etc." New employees and students received an induction and were paired with mentors, which helped them understand their roles and responsibilities more clearly. Together, these factors ensured that children were consistently cared for and supported by reflective practitioners, leading to improved outcomes for them.

Families were kept informed about their children's care through parent meetings, planned events and daily conversations. Parents reported having a good relationship with the staff and felt that their children were well cared for. One shared, "Staff keep me informed on how my child has been each day. They are always there if I have any questions or need advice". Another said, "Staff are always willing to sit down and chat, ease any concerns and work to the best ability for each child". The partnership approach fostered positive relationships, benefiting both children and families.

Performance monitoring by senior leaders included individualised support and time-to-talk sessions, where staff reflected on their professional development and discussed any concerns regarding their wellbeing. One staff member shared, "Our head is approachable, and we are welcome to speak to them at any time. We also have our wellbeing meetings to discuss how things are going". These conversations ensured that achievement goals were agreed upon, kept staff on track, and helped measure progress toward achieving the desired outcomes of the service.

Staff shared some aspects of the service they led, including auditing medication management, which helped to build confidence and enhance skills. The service should continue its plan to promote leadership at all levels across the team. These opportunities would further boost staff morale and improve the quality of service provision.



## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

The provider should ensure staff support children's choices and are responsive to their individual interests and needs to enable them to receive high-quality play, learning, and development opportunities.

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 maintain and develop my interests, activities and what matters to me in the way that I like' (HSCS 2.22).

and

'I make informed choices and decisions about the risks I take in my daily life and am encouraged to take positive risks which enhance the quality of my life' (HSCS 2.24).

**This area for improvement was made on 18 September 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

There was a good balance of spontaneous and intentional learning experiences to support children's interests, learning and progression. This improvement ensured children were supported and challenged in a way that was right for them.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The leadership team should develop room monitoring arrangements to ensure children have free-flow access outdoors and choice to enjoy more exciting and challenging indoor and outdoor play experiences that support natural curiosity and creativity.

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 I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 18 September 2024.**

## Action taken since then

Senior leaders monitored staff practices and daily routines to ensure that older children had free-flow access to the outdoors every day. This approach should also be extended to younger children. Senior leaders supported staff in both playrooms by modelling good practice and providing training opportunities to enhance knowledge, development and skills. These opportunities enabled staff to provide more engaging and stimulating play experiences that fostered children's natural curiosity and creativity.

This area for improvement has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 3

The provider should ensure staff are skilled and competent and, after being trained on elements of their roles, can demonstrate and practice what they have learned to support meeting the needs of children and provide high-quality outcomes for them.

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 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)

and

'I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential' (HSCS 1.6).

**This area for improvement was made on 18 September 2024.**

## Action taken since then

Staff had undertaken a range of training opportunities and professional reading, which supported them in their role to support the needs of children, leading to improved outcomes for them.

This area for improvement has been met.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

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