

# Shawhead Family Learning Centre Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 May 2026

**Service provided by:**  
North Lanarkshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000237

**Service no:**  
CS2003015410

## About the service

Shawhead Family Learning Centre is a day care service operated by North Lanarkshire council. The centre consists of three large playrooms, a lunchroom and dedicated sensory and STEM room. It is registered to provide care for a maximum of 61 children at any one time, including no more than six children under two years and no more than 15 children aged two to under three years.

The service is based within a quiet residential area in Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire. The service is situated close to shops, transport links and other community facilities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 and 19 May 2026 between 08:30 and 17:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 19 May 2026. 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 since last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received eight completed questionnaires from families and nine from staff
- spoke with staff and the management team
- spoke with five families using the service
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with two visiting professionals.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well-maintained and that a service is operating legally.

At the time inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing interactions and responsive care which supported them to feel happy, confident, safe and secure.
- Staff worked very well together. They were compassionate, friendly and motivated. It was evident they had children's best interests and wellbeing at the heart of their work.
- Effective quality assurance processes were in place and had contributed to improvements in practice.
- Staff had worked hard to implement changes to improve the indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Increasing the use of wider community spaces would provide opportunities to deepen play and learning experiences.
- Positive relationships with families and other professionals supported continuity of care and effective partnerships.

## 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

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Leadership                                    | 5 - Very Good |
| Children thrive and develop in quality spaces | 5 - Very Good |
| Children play and learn                       | 5 - Very Good |
| Children are supported to achieve             | 5 - Very Good |

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

## Leadership 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The setting had a clear, well-established vision that was evident in daily practice. Staff built secure, trusting relationships with families and used each child's unique strengths as the foundation for learning. Families were consulted on the vision and values. This helped to ensure they remained relevant and reflective of the community's needs and wishes.

The setting showed a strong commitment to partnership working, valuing opportunities to collaborate and learn alongside other agencies to improve outcomes for children and families. Staff actively sought and acted on professional feedback to continually strengthen their practice. Families were regularly invited to share their views, and a 'you said, we did' approach clearly demonstrated how their feedback informed change. This helped to build trust and transparency, which supported families to feel valued and heard. Staff described a positive and supportive culture which focused on growth and continuous learning. They felt valued, listened to and confident in raising challenges or sharing ideas.

The service's quality assurance processes were supported by a detailed calendar outlining monitoring, audits, training and reviews. This helped to ensure consistency of practice. This included audits of medication which were regularly reviewed with parents to help ensure all information as current and accurate.

The improvement plan had a clear rationale, which focused on progression for all learners, improving the quality of spaces and experiences and strengthening staff knowledge through targeted training. The plan set out measurable aims, interventions and clear methods for tracking and evaluating progress. It was used as a live working document, with regular updates recorded and reviewed. We saw evidence of achievements to date and identified next steps. This showed that improvement was an ongoing continuous process.

Personal development reviews offered structured opportunities for staff to reflect on recent training, identify future learning needs and discuss aspects of their role they found rewarding or challenging. Individual strengths were recognised and valued, which contributed towards a positive and supportive culture. We discussed where these could be further developed to support staff in achieving their identified goals to inform their practice. This would help support staff in delivering high-quality care for children.

Leaders had created conditions where staff felt empowered and confident to lead and initiate change. Staff worked well as a team and demonstrated a commitment to provide a high-quality service. They were motivated, enthusiastic and spoke positively of how continuous professional development, including using current guidance and research helped to inform their practice. The use of pre and post training evaluations effectively highlighted increased confidence and knowledge, demonstrating the positive influence of professional learning on practice. Challenge questions supported staff to identify strengths and areas for further development. This strengthened staff awareness of the 'Quality Improvement Framework' and best practice guidance.

Induction processes were in place and effectively covered the key information new staff needed, including policies, risk assessments, child protection procedures and essential health and safety guidance.

Reflection systems were also built into the induction process, giving staff opportunities to record and evaluate their progress as they settled into their role. Ensuring these were completed consistently and within agreed timescales, would support effective monitoring and timely support. This would help maintain a strong, well-informed team and ensure new staff felt confident and well supported as they began their journey in the setting.

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces **5 - Very Good**

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work, and identified very few areas for improvement. Therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Since the last inspection management and staff had worked hard to improve the setting. Significant changes were contributing towards a clean, warm and welcoming environment for children. This included replacing flooring, painting all playrooms and improving fixtures and fittings. The entrance area displayed information about the setting which supported a welcoming environment. Each child had access to their own space to store their personal items, which helped promote a sense of belonging.

The service had reviewed their play spaces to support the needs of children. Spaces had been improved over time through ongoing environmental audits, including focused reviews of numeracy, maths and outdoor provision. Regular walk arounds enabled staff to identify gaps, refresh resources and ensure spaces remained purposeful and engaging.

Careful consideration had been given to the layout of the rooms to offer a range of spaces for children to make choices, support their interest and develop their ideas. The playroom offered a wide range of sensory experiences, with well-defined quieter spaces that supported focus, engagement and sustained involvement. Children had access to a wide range of opportunities to develop their curiosity, imagination and problem solving. For example, block play and loose parts (resources that can be moved, taken apart and put together) were available, which encouraged children to use creative thinking and problem-solving strategies as they developed their ideas through play.

Resources were accessible and well organised, encouraging creativity, problem solving, resilience and child-led play. Play spaces were thoughtfully prepared before children arrived, supporting a calm, positive start to the day. Children could adapt and change these spaces as their interests developed and they were given time to revisit experiences, supporting deeper learning and exploration.

Health and wellbeing was promoted through outdoor play experiences. Children could access outdoor play throughout the day. A system was in place to support children's choice when doors to the garden were closed. We discussed where the use of visuals would continue to support children's understanding of this choice.

The garden had been developed to provide a range of spaces for the development of physical skills and exploration. For example, different levels of surfaces outdoors provided opportunities for running, climbing and sliding. Children were highly engaged in water play outdoors, providing opportunities for schematic play, physical development and problem solving.

Children experienced high-quality, nurturing environments that promoted children's safety, independence and confidence. Maintenance checklists were used effectively to identify hazards and record actions taken.

Children were also actively involved in risk assessment processes. They had opportunities to complete daily risk assessments of outdoors spaces, identifying potential hazards with staff. This was supporting children to develop an awareness of safety through everyday experiences and routines.

Children benefited from a safe and secure setting, with a range of safety measures in place to ensure children did not come to harm. Policies and risk assessments were in place to guide safe practice and were regularly reviewed. Staff were clear about their responsibility to protect children, ensuring they were kept safe from harm. This was demonstrated in their day to day approaches.

The setting had introduced more robust measures to ensure the environment was clean, well-maintained and welcoming. Outdated or unused resources had been removed and replaced with higher quality, purposeful materials that supported learning and development. Infection prevention and control measures had improved. This included the removal of some furnishings, such as carpets, which helped to ensure areas were easier to maintain and clean.

At the last inspection an area for improvement was set to improve children's changing facilities. The service had created an additional changing space to meet the needs of children. This helped to support smoother routines and ensured children's care needs were met promptly and sensitively.

## Children play and learn **5 - Very Good**

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were highly motivated, confident and deeply engaged in meaningful play. They demonstrated strong independence, led their own learning and showed enthusiasm across a wide range of activities that nurtured creativity, problem solving and social development. Children within the setting were having fun, laughing, chatting and playing alongside staff. This helped children feel a sense of comfort, security and joy.

Children were confident in their play and initiated conversation about height and measurements. During play, children initiated conversations about height and measurement. Staff responded thoughtfully by adding measuring tapes, rulers and other numeracy resources. This demonstrated responsive practice giving children time and space to explore their ideas.

Since the previous inspection, the playroom had benefited from more loose parts and construction materials. The introduction of a dedicated STEM room, equipped with science, technology, engineering and maths resources, further enhanced opportunities for experimentation, collaboration and creative thinking. We discussed where extending similar resources within main playrooms could provide further opportunities for deeper learning throughout the day.

Children's interests were extended through skilled, responsive interactions and open-ended questioning. Carefully planned provocations encouraged curiosity, exploration and inquiry. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of child development, recognising and celebrating what children could do. Learning opportunities were intentionally designed to reflect individual interests and preferred learning styles, enabling children to progress at pace that's right for them.

Staff showed a strong understanding of schematic play (repeated patterns of behaviour). These were effectively embedded into daily practice. This supported children's natural curiosity, encouraged exploration and promoted problem solving, while also supporting high levels of engagement.

Both indoor and outdoor environments supported numeracy and literacy. Number rich and text rich visuals, alongside newly purchased resources, created meaningful opportunities for counting, sorting, mark making and language development.

Children's voices were clearly valued. Floor books captured their comments, drawings and their reflections on their learning. This demonstrated planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interest.

Observations of children's play and progress were shared with families through an online platform, strengthening home and nursery partnerships. A system was in place to monitor the sharing of learning. We discussed where this could be further developed to record key development in children's play, learning and development, as well as developing approaches to review timescales for next steps. Parents appreciated the personalised nature of the journals, with one commenting, "It's lovely to see how they use his interests to support his development."

Effective tracking systems provided a clear overview of each child's development and progress over time, supporting timely interventions and targeted planning.

## Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work, and identified very few areas for improvement. Therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced warm, positive and consistent interactions that supported secure nurturing relationships. Staff's calm and compassionate approach created an inclusive environment that promoted children's wellbeing and confidence. One parent described staff as, "consistently caring, nurturing, and attentive," highlighting the positive impact on their children's confidence and social development.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of each child's individual needs, offering reassurance through gentle words, warm smiles and comforting interactions. As a result, children were relaxed, confident and naturally sought staff for both play and emotional support. Children reflected this sense of security, sharing comments such as, "they tell me well done" and "I get good cuddles."

Mealtimes were calm and sociable, with children engaging in meaningful conversation. With opportunities for children to engage in meaningful conversation with each other and staff. Opportunities for independence, such as selecting food and clearing plates, supported confidence and responsibility. Allergies and preferences were effectively managed. Staff provided attentive supervision to ensure a safe and positive experience.

Staff showed a strong understanding of individualised transitions, supporting children and families at key stages, including moving from home to nursery, between playrooms and on to school. Approaches were carefully tailored to help children feel safe and confident.

One parent shared, "They took the time to really get to know him and worked with patience and understanding. Offering an extended settling-in period was successful."

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning with families, enabling staff to deliver individualised care based on a clear understanding of each child's needs. Children were happy, settled and engaged in their nursery experiences. When additional support was required, staff collaborated effectively with families and professionals to identify needs and implement targeted strategies. This helped to ensure continuity in their care.

Individualised strategies were embedded effectively to meet children's needs. Staff used a range of communication approaches, including visual supports, objects of reference and tools, such as an emotions box to promote engagement, wellbeing and interaction.

Chronologies were in place for children with enhanced needs, offering a clear record of their strengths and the challenges they may face. We discussed further enhancing this to ensure significant events were recorded for all children.

Tracking systems and regular meetings ensured children's progress and wellbeing were monitored. This helped strengthen the early identification of children's needs and that support remains responsive and impactful for all children.

Children and families were at the heart of the service. Staff valued their connections with families and strived to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment. Staff worked closely with parents to support children's emotional wellbeing and learning, using shared strategies across home and nursery for consistency. Families were engaged through daily conversations, online updates and stay and play and cooking sessions. A parent group provided a supportive space to share experiences, build connections and contribute ideas. Their successful fundraiser reflected strong commitment to the setting and strengthened the sense of community.

## 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

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 state that:

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 15 May 2025.**

#### Action taken since then

Through ongoing self-evaluation and the use of audit tools, the service had reviewed both the indoor and outdoor environments to ensure children had meaningful opportunities to consolidate their learning. As a result, a wider range of open-ended toys and materials had been introduced to promote children's natural curiosity and to enhance their creative and imaginative play.

Examples of these improvements included the addition of everyday household objects within the home corner, the extension of the creative area to increase choice, the development of a playdough area using loose parts and the further enhancement of the outdoor mud kitchen with natural resources. These changes supported richer, more spontaneous, child-led play experiences.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

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 Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

**This area for improvement was made on 15 May 2025.**

#### Action taken since then

The service successfully ensured that children received care in a safe, clean and well-maintained environment. This was achieved through a comprehensive deep clean of the premises, repainting of playrooms and the purchase of a wide range of new fixtures and fittings, to enhance the overall quality of the setting.

Approaches to risk assessment were strengthened, with staff completing relevant training to support them in identifying and responding to potential hazards. This learning was used to update and improve the service's risk assessments, ensuring appropriate safeguards were consistently in place, to promote children's safety and wellbeing.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 3

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 15 May 2015.**

### Action taken since then

Staff had completed infection prevention and control training and demonstrated a good understanding of effective infection control practices. The nursery environment was clean and well-maintained. In addition, the service had reviewed and improved the storage of materials and food items, to ensure they meet best practice guidance.

The nappy changing area had been reviewed and improved. This included replacing the flooring and removing unnecessary materials, to ensure all surfaces were easy to clean and maintain. All materials within the bathroom had been stored appropriately. Supporting effective infection prevention and control. These actions contribute to children's health, safety and wellbeing ensuring that staff are trained, competent and confident in their practice.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

### Previous area for improvement 4

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 that:

'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).

**This area for improvement was made on 15 May 2025.**

### Action taken since then

The service had reviewed changing facilities, to ensure there were sufficient and appropriate spaces to meet the needs and number of children. This included, creating an additional changing area. These improvements supported children's health and wellbeing by enabling intimate personal care to be carried out safely and respectfully, reducing waiting times and streamlining daily routines.

**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.scot](http://www.careinspectorate.scot).

Detailed evaluations

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Leadership                                       | 5 - Very Good |
| Leadership and management of staff and resources | 5 - Very Good |
| Children thrive and develop in quality spaces    | 5 - Very Good |
| Children experience high quality spaces          | 5 - Very Good |
| Children play and learn                          | 5 - Very Good |
| Playing, learning and developing                 | 5 - Very Good |
| Children are supported to achieve                | 5 - Very Good |
| Nurturing care and support                       | 5 - Very Good |

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