Barrhill Early Years Centre
Day Care of Children

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Telephone: 01465 716 805

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 May 2026

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003016137

About the service

Barrhill Early Years Centre is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 10 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. The service is provided by South Ayrshire Council and is located within the village of Barrhill near Girvan.

The service operates from a classroom within Barrhill Primary School. The service has direct access to an outdoor area, which is fenced off from the secure school playground. The service is close to local village amenities, green spaces, parks, and transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 May 2026 between 09:00 and 17:30. This 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.

To inform our evaluation we:
- Spoke and spent time with children using the service. We also met with two family members.
- Spoke with two staff and the management team.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.
- Spoke with one 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 of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

• Leaders had created a clear and shared vision which was well embedded in practice.

• Children were highly engaged, motivated and confident learners who benefited from rich, meaningful play experiences that reflected their interests and supported their curiosity and development.

• Staff interactions were consistently warm, responsive and skilful.

• Children experienced high-quality nurturing care, with sensitive support during routines and transitions.

• Strong, trusting relationships with families enhanced children's care and wellbeing, with effective communication and a flexible approach that responded to family needs.

• The service should strengthen approaches to observation, planning and personal planning to better capture children's learning and ensure consistent, sustained progress for all 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

Leadership	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 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.

Leaders had established a clear and shared vision which was well embedded in daily practice. The vision, "Grow, learn, thrive - together," alongside values of kindness, respect, teamwork and inclusion, was consistently evident. Staff warmly welcomed families into the setting and created a positive, inclusive ethos. For example, we saw staff greeting families at the door and taking time to share information at drop-off and collection times. Individualised plans were in place and reflected children's needs well. The vision was reviewed regularly with families through discussions and accessible approaches such as QR codes, ensuring their views were included. As a result, children experienced a nurturing and inclusive environment where they felt respected, secure and well supported to meet their individual needs.

The service demonstrated a positive and developing culture of reflection and improvement. Staff had taken meaningful action to review and improve practice, for example revisiting lunchtime routines to better meet children's needs. Dynamic risk assessments were used effectively when changes were introduced, ensuring children's safety and experiences were prioritised. Staff used a self-evaluation floorbook to record learning and identify next steps, such as introducing additional play provocations to extend children's thinking and building on prior knowledge. Following feedback from families, the service extended PEEP sessions to include babies and siblings within the wider community. One parent commented, "children love these sessions," and another stated, "more sessions please." This demonstrated that feedback was valued and acted upon. As a result, children benefited from more engaging experiences, stronger community links and learning opportunities that reflected their interests and needs. The service should now continue to strengthen how it evidences the impact of improvements over time.

Robust recruitment processes were in place through the local authority, ensuring staff were safely appointed with appropriate checks completed. Although there had been limited staff turnover, a clear induction process was available to support new staff. Staff spoke positively about the support they received from management and demonstrated confidence and professionalism in their roles. We observed strong, respectful relationships across the team, with staff working closely together and reflecting on their practice. For example, staff identified training needs and discussed next steps to improve outcomes for children. As a result, children experienced consistent, high-quality care from a stable, knowledgeable staff team. This supported children to feel safe, build secure relationships and develop confidence within the setting.

Children play and learn 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.

Children were highly engaged in their play and learning. They were confident, motivated and clearly enjoyed their experiences across the setting. For example, we observed a child independently creating an outdoor obstacle course, where they were supported to take appropriate risks and assess their own safety. Children benefited from free flow access to the outdoor environment, which encouraged choice, independence and exploration. Learning was often extended in meaningful ways. For example, staff enriched the story Handa's Surprise with real fruits, which supported children to explore language and early numeracy. Children

confidently identified quantities, with one recognising that two tangerines were not enough and that four were needed.

Children's curiosity and ideas were valued and responded to effectively. For example, when a child shared an interest in a bird they had seen, staff extended this into a rich learning experience using books and binoculars outdoors. This led to meaningful discussions and exploration, including investigating how binoculars changed visual perception. Staff were skilled at recognising and supporting children's interests. In another example, a child exploring transporting schemas was provided with a range of stones in the water tray to deepen their play. As a result, children experienced engaging, child-led learning which supported their curiosity, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Interactions between staff and children were consistently warm, respectful and nurturing. Staff were attentive and responsive, and they listened carefully to children's ideas. We observed strong examples of staff extending learning through open-ended questioning and sensitive support. For example, staff worked collaboratively with a family to share songs and stories in another language. This supported the child to feel proud and confident, as they led the learning and shared their knowledge with others. These interactions supported children's communication, language and social skills, while also promoting inclusion and a sense of belonging.

Staff were skilled at balancing involvement in play, offering support and challenge without taking over children's experiences. Even within a small group, staff demonstrated a good understanding of individual needs and tailored their interactions accordingly. As a result, children developed confidence, independence and resilience through meaningful, well-supported play.

Planning approaches showed that children's voices were beginning to influence experiences, with some examples of child-led planning evident. Staff recognised and celebrated children's achievements effectively, which supported children's confidence and self-esteem. However, observations and assessment processes were not yet consistently capturing the full depth of children's learning. For example, while the enquiry-based floorbook recorded experiences, it did not always clearly identify learning or next steps for all children.

The service had begun to encourage greater family involvement in children's learning, although this was not yet fully developed. We discussed further approaches such as digital communication and child-led sharing of learning. Strengthening observation, planning and assessment processes would ensure learning is more clearly tracked and inform next steps.

Children are supported to achieve — 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.

Children experienced high-quality nurturing care from a kind, respectful and compassionate staff team. We observed warm and positive relationships between staff, children and families. Staff communicated with each other in a caring and respectful way, which children mirrored in their own interactions. This created a calm and supportive ethos. For example, when a child became upset due to coughing, staff responded quickly and sensitively, coming down to the child's level, offering reassurance and providing water. As a result, children felt cared for, understood and emotionally secure.

Care routines were well organised and responsive to children's individual needs. Toilets were easily accessible from the playroom, supporting independence and dignity. Staff adapted routines in a flexible way

to meet children's needs throughout the day. Transitions were calm and well supported, particularly due to the small, community-focused environment. Staff used creative approaches to support children who found transitions challenging. For example, children were supported to carry objects of reference, such as a soft toy, which were sensitively managed to ensure good hygiene. Early approaches, including a now and next board, were being introduced to further support understanding. As a result, children experienced smooth transitions and were supported to regulate their emotions, promoting their wellbeing.

Children appeared happy, confident and secure within the setting. They were relaxed and engaged in play and learning, demonstrating that the environment met their needs effectively. Strong, trusting relationships with staff supported children to feel valued and safe.

Personal plans were in place for all children and reflected their individual needs, interests and development. Staff had recently engaged in training to improve the format of personal plans and had already begun to reflect on how these could be strengthened to become more effective working documents. Staff knew children and their families very well and used this knowledge to support daily practice. However, current plans did not always fully capture detailed information which would support consistency, particularly in the event of staff absence. The service had begun to introduce improved documentation, which should be fully embedded and regularly reviewed to ensure it clearly reflects children's health, safety and wellbeing needs.

Families were actively involved in contributing to personal plans, although children were less involved in this process. Further consideration should be given to how children's voices can be meaningfully included. As a result, children's individual needs were understood and supported, although strengthening planning approaches would enhance consistency and further improve outcomes.

Strong partnerships with families were a clear strength of the service. Staff knew families well and had developed trusting and respectful relationships. We observed staff taking time to engage in meaningful conversations with families at the end of sessions, demonstrating open and two-way communication. Family preferences and circumstances were respected and influenced practice. For example, one family's request for a later start time was accommodated to support their working arrangements. The small community context supported positive transitions and continuity of care for children and families.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	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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