Glenbrae Children's Centre
Day Care of Children

Kilmacolm Road
Greenock
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Telephone: 01475 714 987

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 September 2026

Service provided by:
Inverclyde Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000212

Service no:
CS2003016321

About the service

Glenbrae Children's Centre is a daycare service provided by Inverclyde Council. The service is located in Greenock close to local shops, a bus route, primary schools and nurseries.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 54 children not yet attending primary school at any one time.

- of those 54 no more than 9 are aged under 2 years
- no more than 15 are aged 2 years to under 3 years
- no more than 30 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full-time.

Adult:child ratios will be a minimum of:

- Under 2 years - 1:3
- 2 years to under 3 years - 1:5
- 3 years and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than 4 hours per day
- 1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 2 September and Thursday 3 September 2026. The inspection was carried out by three 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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- received 23 completed questionnaires from parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

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

- Children experienced highly nurturing, responsive and trusting relationships with staff who knew them exceptionally well.
- Children were highly engaged, motivated learners who demonstrated confidence, curiosity and sustained involvement in their learning.
- Staff consistently promoted emotional wellbeing, children's rights, inclusion and belonging, resulting in children who were confident, resilient, emotionally secure and engaged.
- Partnerships extended beyond information sharing and demonstrated sustained measurable improvements in family wellbeing, confidence and children's outcomes.
- Leaders and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to self-evaluation and continuous improvement using a wide range of evidence to inform change.
- Leadership had a clear and sustainable positive impact on the quality of experiences and outcomes for children, families and staff.

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	6 - Excellent
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	6 - Excellent

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

Leadership 6 - Excellent

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as excellent where aspects of performance were outstanding and sector leading.

The service had developed a clear and ambitious vision with children, families, staff and the wider community. This vision reflected a strong commitment to nurturing relationships, children's rights, inclusion, equity, fun, adventure and ensuring children and families remained at the centre of service delivery. The vision and values effectively informed practice, decision-making and improvement priorities.

Evidence showed that leaders and staff embedded these values in daily practice. Children experienced warm, responsive relationships and received consistent comfort, reassurance and emotional support. Staff promoted children's rights effectively, creating a culture where respect, inclusion and wellbeing underpinned practice. A parent told us: "Relationships are truly at the heart of Glenbrae. I have an amazing relationship with my child's key worker. I know I can speak to them at any time, and I always feel completely comfortable doing so. I also have a fantastic relationship with the management team, and the other staff, not only in my child's room but across the whole nursery. There is always a friendly face to welcome us in the morning, and staff are always happy to chat and check in. What makes Glenbrae special is that they make an effort to get to know the whole family, not just the children. Because of this, Glenbrae feels like a family, warm, welcoming, and genuinely caring."

Our observations, discussions and review of evidence demonstrated that the service's vision and values were strongly embedded in day-to-day practice. Staff consistently provided comfort, reassurance, affection and emotional support, helping children to feel safe, secure and valued. Children's rights were well-understood and promoted across the setting, contributing to a positive culture where respect, inclusion and wellbeing were at the heart of highly effective practice.

Families were meaningfully involved in the life and work of the service through a range of formal and informal opportunities. They participated in stay-and-play sessions, Bookbug activities, care planning meetings, reviews and ongoing discussions about their children's experiences. Parents and carers told us they felt welcomed, included and valued as partners in their children's care and learning. They consistently reported that staff listened to their views, respected their contributions and worked collaboratively with them to support positive outcomes for their children. One parent told us: "Honestly, I don't feel there is anything that needs to be improved. Glenbrae Nursery provides a warm, caring, and supportive environment where my child is happy, safe, and thriving. The staff are fantastic, communication is excellent, and the range of activities is great. We are very happy with the service as it is."

Leaders created an empowering culture that promoted shared responsibility and distributed leadership. Staff demonstrated strong ownership of the service's vision and improvement priorities. For example, staff had leadership roles in literacy, numeracy, digital champion, nature nurture and wellbeing. They used reflective practice effectively to evaluate their work and respond to the changing needs of children and families. This collaborative approach strengthened improvement capacity and supported positive outcomes.

The management team and staff engaged openly throughout the inspection. They welcomed professional dialogue, reflected critically on practice and demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Leaders managed recent changes effectively and provided appropriate support, mentoring and professional learning to build leadership capacity.

The service demonstrated a strong approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Leaders and staff regularly used research, best practice guidance, stakeholder feedback, professional dialogue and observations of children's experiences to evaluate impact and inform improvement planning. This resulted in meaningful changes that improved outcomes for children and families.

Quality assurance and improvement planning processes were robust and focused on improving outcomes. Leaders used evidence effectively to identify strengths, prioritise development needs and monitor the impact of improvements. Priorities reflected the needs of children, families and the wider community, and resulted in meaningful and sustainable change.

Staff consistently reported feeling valued, respected and supported. Leaders promoted trust, collaboration and continuous learning, while providing opportunities for staff to lead practice, contribute to developments and participate in decision-making. As a result, staff demonstrated strong accountability, confidence and commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children and families.

Leadership was a significant strength of the service. The manager demonstrated exceptional leadership through a clear vision, strong values and an unwavering commitment to high-quality care, play and learning. We found the management team fostered a culture of trust, respect, collaboration and continuous improvement where children, families and staff felt valued and empowered.

The manager demonstrated compassion, authenticity and responsiveness in their interactions. Staff spoke highly of the support, encouragement and trust they received and described a culture where distributed leadership was embedded. This empowered staff to use their strengths, share expertise and contribute confidently to service improvement.

We found the manager's leadership had a significant and sustainable impact on the service. Strong relationships, effective self-evaluation and a relentless focus on improvement created a service where children thrived. Families experienced genuine partnership and belonging, while staff demonstrated high levels of confidence and motivation. As a result, the service showed an exceptional capacity to sustain and further develop these positive outcomes for children, families, staff and the community.

Children play and learn — 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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 high-quality play and learning that promoted choice, independence and participation. Staff encouraged children to influence their learning, and evidence from floor books, learning journals and observations showed that children's ideas regularly shaped experiences. For example, an interest in fish developed into research, practical investigations, and the creation of a nursery fish tank, supporting curiosity, responsibility and achievement.

Children accessed stimulating, well-organised environments that reflected their interests and developmental needs. Accessible resources enabled them to make choices, follow interests and sustain play. Staff extended learning through effective interactions, questioning and discussion, encouraging critical thinking, problem-solving and exploration. A parent told us: "My [child] loves attending Glenbrae Nursery. [Child] is always excited to go and comes home happy and full of stories about their day. The nurturing staff create a warm, caring environment where [child] feels safe, valued, and encouraged to learn. The variety of activities, opportunities for outdoor play, and strong focus on development have helped [child] grow in confidence and make wonderful friendships."

Staff used national guidance, including Realising the Ambition, to inform nurturing, responsive and play-based approaches. Floor books and learning journals showed that children regularly developed their thinking, decision-making and problem-solving skills. Staff captured children's ideas effectively and used them to inform responsive planning. Children benefited from uninterrupted periods of play that supported deep engagement and individual learning.

Online learning journals provided families with meaningful insight into children's progress, learning and next steps. Families contributed achievements from home, supporting continuity between nursery and home learning.

Outdoor play formed an integral part of daily experiences. Children moved freely between indoor and outdoor environments, promoting independence and active learning. The outdoor area provided opportunities for creativity, investigation and physical challenge. We observed children engaging in mud play, balancing activities, outdoor art and nature exploration. One child independently measured worms, and discussed findings with peers. These experiences supported curiosity, confidence, resilience and physical development. Leaders should review access to outdoor play to ensure children continue to access outdoor learning at a time they choose and throughout the day.

Staff provided warm, nurturing interactions and responded sensitively to children's individual needs and interests. They adapted planning and experiences in response to emerging interests, ensuring learning remained relevant and engaging. Children benefited from a broad range of sensory, imaginative, exploratory and construction play experiences. For example, staff creatively adapted indoor water play to support a child's schematic interests. Children's interest with transport led to a train journey and a visit to see the CalMac ferry at Wemyss Bay, inspired by one child's summer holiday trip to the Isle of Bute. This developed into sustained research, enquiry, discussion and hands-on learning experiences. Children confidently recalled their learning and demonstrated clear progression in their knowledge and understanding.

Children remained motivated and actively engaged throughout the inspection. Staff extended learning through questioning, encouragement and sustained shared thinking. Planned experiences incorporated literacy and numeracy in meaningful contexts and reflected children's interests and developmental needs. Floor books and learning journals demonstrated clear links to Curriculum for Excellence, the wellbeing indicators and children's rights. We found children's views consistently informed planning.

Children demonstrated confidence, security and a strong sense of belonging. They formed positive relationships with peers and adults, cooperated well and engaged in sustained shared play. Several children confidently discussed their learning and interests with us, demonstrating positive self-esteem and secure attachments.

Staff demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to positive outcomes for children. They understood when to observe and allow children to lead learning and when to intervene to extend thinking. Relationships throughout the setting were caring, respectful and nurturing, and children confidently sought support and guidance from staff. Parents told us. "The whole team are very supportive of both the children and the families in their care" and "I like how approachable and friendly the staff are. They communicate so well during drop offs and pick up times. We are always aware what my child has been up to during their time at nursery ..."

Leadership of learning was effective. Leaders supported staff through professional dialogue, reflection and guidance on observations, assessment, planning and next steps. This contributed to continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children.

Staff used observations effectively to inform responsive planning and ensure experiences remained relevant, engaging and appropriately challenging. Learning journals provided a comprehensive record of children's learning, achievements and progress, enriched by family contributions. Tracking processes and discussions with parents helped identify next steps and ensured families remained actively involved in planning.

Partnership working with families was a significant strength. Families felt involved in their children's learning and valued as partners. Well-established home learning approaches extended interests beyond the nursery and promoted consistency between home and nursery, supporting children's confidence, wellbeing, progress and achievement. As a result, children benefited from an inclusive service that promoted participation, equality and respect for diversity. Cultural, religious and community experiences helped children develop an understanding of different traditions, beliefs and the wider world.

To further strengthen practice, leaders should continue to develop and embed the planning for under threes and review risk assessments and individual support plans for children requiring additional support. Clearer identification of risks, control measures and responsibilities would improve consistency and further support positive outcomes for children.

Children are supported to achieve — 6 - Excellent

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as excellent where aspects of performance were outstanding and sector leading.

Children experienced exceptionally strong, nurturing relationships that enhanced their wellbeing and development. They actively sought comfort, reassurance and support from staff, demonstrating deep trust and secure attachments. Staff responded warmly and sensitively, helping children feel safe, valued and respected. As a result, children demonstrated high levels of confidence, resilience and emotional security.

Staff placed children's wellbeing at the heart of practice and used their strong understanding of nurturing approaches and wellbeing indicators to meet individual needs. As a result, children showed emotional awareness, resilience and confidence in expressing their feelings. A parent told us. "I enjoy taking my child to Glenbrae Children's Centre because it provides a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment where they feel happy, safe and supported. The staff are caring, attentive, and genuinely invested in my child's development, ensuring that their individual needs are always met. I appreciate how the nursery supports and celebrates my child's milestones, helping them to grow in confidence and learn new skills through engaging activities. It is reassuring to see my child thriving in such a positive environment, and I value the strong communication and partnership between the nursery and our family."

Staff knew children and families exceptionally well and anticipated needs before concerns escalated. Families told us staff understood their child as an individual and provided support that positively influenced family life beyond the nursery. Several families described receiving vital emotional and practical support during significant life events, demonstrating the service's sustained impact on children and families.

Staff embedded children's rights throughout practice and ensured children influenced decisions about their care, routines and play. Children confidently expressed their views and knew staff would listen and respond. This strengthened children's sense of identity, belonging and self-worth.

Mealtimes reflected the service's inclusive and nurturing ethos. Children independently managed routines, made choices and engaged in meaningful conversations. Staff used these opportunities to promote language, social skills, wellbeing and independence. As a result, children demonstrated confidence, independence and social competence.

Children requiring additional support benefited from highly individualised approaches. Staff worked proactively with families and professionals to remove barriers and ensure effective support. Evidence showed children made very good progress in their wellbeing and development.

Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to helping every child achieve their potential. They recognised and celebrated children's strengths and achievements, and children spoke proudly about their successes and learning.

Transitions were a significant strength. Staff worked closely with families to ensure children felt safe, secure and prepared for change. Effective transition processes-maintained continuity in relationships, care and learning, helping children approach change with confidence.

Staff used their knowledge of children's interests, strengths and aspirations to provide personalised support. Children achieved positive outcomes because staff responded flexibly to their needs. Those requiring additional support achieved particularly strong outcomes through effective partnership working. Parents told us:

"One of the most positive aspects of my child's experience at Glenbrae is the genuinely nurturing, relationship centred environment. [Child] is welcomed every day by staff who know them well, understand their needs, and makes them feel safe, valued, and included. The open door policy and strong communication mean I always feel involved and connected to their learning ..."

"My child takes part in a wide range of rich, play-based learning experiences both indoors and outdoors ..."

"... [Child] loves having the freedom to move between the two spaces, and the staff make excellent use of the environment to provide engaging, child led activities. They have opportunities to bake, go shopping for ingredients, explore nature, and take part in creative and physical play that builds [child's] confidence and independence. Another strength is the strong community involvement. I also really value the regular updates on Learning Journals and Twitter [X]. Overall, the most positive aspect is that [child] is cared for in a safe, secure, well maintained environment where [child] is happy, confident, and thriving."

Partnerships with families was sector-leading and significantly enhanced children's wellbeing and development. Families described themselves as genuine partners whose views influenced decisions and service developments. Effective engagement enabled families to play an active role in shaping children's experiences. One parent told us: "I think all staff are very welcoming from the minute we walk through front door to me leaving again. They are approachable and able to speak if and when I need them. I know nothing is ever a bother when it comes to the staff looking after our child. I always tell everyone how great the staff are at Glenbrae with the children and parents."

The service created a welcoming and inclusive community where families felt valued and respected. Families reported high levels of trust in leaders and staff, with many describing the nursery as "like a family" and highlighting its positive impact on family wellbeing.

Leaders and staff fostered a culture where relationships, care and inclusion were everyone's responsibility. This culture underpinned all aspects of the service and resulted in consistently high-quality experiences. Children demonstrated confidence, curiosity, resilience, emotional security and a strong sense of belonging.

We identified major strengths that had a significant and sustained impact on outcomes for children and families. Highly nurturing relationships, exceptional partnership working and a deeply embedded rights-based approach were evident throughout the service. Children experienced love, security, respect and belonging. While families described the support they received as having a positive impact beyond the nursery. As a result, we found the service demonstrated sector-leading practice that delivered excellent outcomes 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.scot

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	6 - Excellent
Leadership and management of staff and resources	6 - Excellent

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	6 - Excellent
Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent

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