

Mauchline Primary School Early Childhood Centre

Day Care of Children

Mauchline Primary School
The Loan
Mauchline
KA5 6AN

Telephone: 01290 550 306

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 August 2026

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2003016956

About the service

Mauchline Primary School Early Childhood Centre is a daycare for children service situated in Mauchline, East Ayrshire. The service is provided by East Ayrshire Council. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children from three years old to not yet attending primary school at any one time. At the time of our inspection, 39 children were registered with the service.

The service has sole use of the premises and the outdoor play area. Children can freely move between indoors and a secure outdoor area. The centre is within walking distance of local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday, 25 August and Wednesday, 26 August 2026, between the hours of 09:15 and 16:00 on day one, and 09:15 to 14:30 on day two. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 completed electronic questionnaires from five families and six members of staff
- spoke with the staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvements are needed throughout this inspection report.

Key messages

- Strong leadership and reflective practice drive continuous improvement, resulting in confident, capable children who thrive in their learning.
- Children benefit from skilled staff, meaningful experiences and responsive environments that promote independence, resilience and engagement.
- Children are confident, curious learners who lead their play and develop independence, creativity and problem-solving skills.
- Skilled staff use responsive interactions and planning to maximise children's progress, engagement and wellbeing.
- Children experience nurturing, responsive relationships that help them feel safe, valued, included and confident to thrive.
- Strong partnerships and personalised support promote children's wellbeing, rights and positive outcomes.

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

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

We found that the setting's vision, values and aims were clearly understood by staff and reflected in daily practice. Staff spoke confidently about their role in supporting children and families and demonstrated a strong commitment to providing high-quality care and learning experiences. Children and staff shared their views openly and honestly, which contributed to a positive and respectful culture.

Leadership promoted continuous improvement and had established effective quality assurance processes. Evidence from peer observations, monitoring activities and professional dialogue showed that staff regularly reflected on practice and used this to improve outcomes for children. For example, staff were observed giving children time to think, explore and solve problems independently before intervening, which supported children's confidence and learning.

Self-evaluation was purposeful and informed service development. The views of children, families and partners were gathered and used to shape improvements. An environmental review had been completed and had informed changes to learning spaces, including the introduction of well-considered play zones. These improvements supported children's engagement, independence and choice.

The improvement plan was relevant to the needs of the service and focused on enhancing outcomes for children. Staff were aware of the identified priorities and could explain how their practice contributed to improvement. The focus on supporting risk through play was helping children develop confidence, resilience and decision-making skills.

Staff demonstrated knowledge of best practice, national guidance and educational approaches. We saw examples of Froebelian principles being embedded through experiences such as clay exploration and block play. These approaches encouraged creativity, problem-solving and sustained play. Staff shared that they had completed outdoor learning training this has supported them to develop outdoor learning. A parent shared with us: "Free flow plays outdoors. Visits to different outdoor areas within the school grounds. Outdoor planting opportunities. Community walks. Visits to the local shops. Play parks. Woodland Wednesday that my children will participate in this year." This had strengthened links with families and the wider community, benefiting children's learning experiences.

Staff told us they felt supported to develop their skills and knowledge. Opportunities for professional learning were available and contributed positively to practice and outcomes for children.

Policies and procedures were in place, regularly reviewed and shared with families. We saw that reviews were planned throughout the year and policies were updated when guidance or practice changed. This helped ensure staff had current information to support safe and consistent practice.

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 were highly engaged in a range of stimulating play and learning experiences. We observed a balance of spontaneous and planned activities that reflected children's interests and encouraged curiosity, creativity and sustained involvement. Children particularly enjoyed storytelling, role play, construction activities, loose parts play, creative arts and interactive games. Staff skilfully supported children's learning while allowing them to lead their own play, resulting in children who were confident, motivated and eager to explore.

Planning and assessment were child-centred and responsive. Staff used observations effectively to identify children's interests and build on their ideas. Outdoor floor books clearly demonstrated how planning evolved in response to children's experiences and interests. For example, staff explained how they enhanced the home corner after a newly enrolled child expressed an interest in using bags during play. This responsive approach ensured children felt valued and included in their learning environment. Children's achievements and progress were recorded and shared with families, supporting continuity between home and the setting. Parents told us: "I can chat with any staff in the ECC about my child at any time. They all have an interest in my child's development and are happy to discuss anything at all;" and "I can chat with any staff in the ECC about my child at any time. They all have an interest in his development and are happy to discuss anything at all."

Children were developing language, literacy and numeracy skills through meaningful play experiences. We observed children using alphabet beanbags while singing the alphabet song and engaging with a range of resources that promoted early literacy and numeracy. Digital learning opportunities were available and used appropriately to enhance learning. Children showed high levels of interest in construction and shape exploration using magnetic resources, which supported mathematical thinking, problem-solving and creativity.

The quality of interactions between staff and children was a key strength. Staff used careful observations to understand children's interests and responded sensitively to extend learning. Children were given time and space to explore, investigate and solve problems independently. Staff supported learning through encouragement, modelling and meaningful conversations rather than directing play. As a result, children were developing confidence, resilience, communication skills and positive relationships. They remained deeply engaged in their play and learning and demonstrated increasing independence.

The service should continue to develop staff questioning to support children's understanding of risk and safety during play. Opportunities should be taken to encourage children to think about and assess risk for themselves through open-ended discussions, such as asking, "How can we stay safe?" rather than simply telling children an activity is unsafe. This will further support children's confidence, decision-making and risk assessment skills.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support.

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, caring and nurturing relationships with staff who knew them well. Staff responded sensitively to children's individual needs, providing reassurance, encouragement and support when required. As a result, children appeared safe, secure and emotionally settled within the setting. Parents shared: "The practitioners are all fantastic, they genuinely care about my child and want to help him feel safe, loved and help him learn;" and "We absolutely love Mauchline ECC and the staff are fantastic at what they provide for the children's learning and wellbeing." They confidently approached staff for help and were supported to express their feelings, make choices and develop positive relationships with others.

Children's rights, participation and inclusion were embedded in practice. Staff listened to children and valued their views, ensuring they were involved in decisions about their play and daily experiences. We saw evidence that children's ideas informed planning and learning experiences. This helped children feel respected, included and heard, in line with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Relationships with families were positive and welcoming. Parents were encouraged to spend time in the setting and there were good opportunities for them to contribute to their child's experience. Staff described a strong commitment to working in partnership with families to support children's wellbeing and development. We noted that the service was continuing to strengthen communication and engagement with families.

Personal plans were in place and had been reviewed appropriately. Plans reflected children's individual needs, strengths, interests, likes and dislikes, along with the support required to help them achieve positive outcomes. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of the children in their care and used this information to provide personalised support.

Medication procedures were well managed. Records were up to date, and staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding the safe administration of medication. This helped ensure children's health needs were met safely and consistently.

Accident and incident procedures were established and understood by staff. Relevant records were maintained, and staff were able to explain the actions taken following incidents and how learning from these informed improvements in practice. This supported children's safety and wellbeing.

Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of child protection responsibilities. They spoke confidently about safeguarding procedures and shared that they had recently completed refresher training. As a result, staff were well placed to respond appropriately to any concerns and help keep children safe.

The service should continue to embed its work with families to ensure strong and consistent partnership working across the setting. This will support parents to remain fully involved in their children's learning, wellbeing and development and help strengthen continuity between home and the setting.

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

Mauchline Primary School Early Childhood Centre should expand opportunities for children by providing activities and resources that extend the children's social, creative, physical and learning experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards 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 8 October 2018.

Action taken since then

Children benefited from a broad range of well-planned experiences that successfully extended their social, creative, physical and learning development. Resources and activities were varied, engaging and responsive to children's interests, resulting in high levels of participation, enjoyment and achievement.

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.

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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