The Playbarn Ltd
Day Care of Children

Lodge Maudslie Club
36 Strawfrank Road
Carstairs Junction
Lanark
ML11 8RD

Telephone: 01555 870 525

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 May 2026

Service provided by:
The Playbarn Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2012011774

Service no:
CS2012306190

About the service

The Playbarn Ltd is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 44 children, currently attending primary school and secondary school year one and two, of whom no more than five are attending secondary school. Five children registered to start school in August, can attend the service during the summer prior to starting school. The service is located in a rural location in Lanark, South Lanarkshire.

Children are cared for in a single storey building, across two dedicated playrooms, a kitchen and toilets. They also have access to an enclosed garden. The service is near to primary schools, shops and transport links.

At the time of the inspection there were 121 children registered to attend the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5-6 May 2026 between 07:30 and 18:45. 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:

- observed the children's experiences
- gathered feedback from 6 families using surveys
- gathered feedback from 7 staff using a survey and discussions
- observed staff practice in the playrooms and outdoor space
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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

- There was a strong ethos placed on the benefits of play and this was evident throughout the setting.
- Staff were skilled communicators, responding to children's needs offering support and challenge.
- The main playroom was organised and tidy, creating a space for children to easily select the materials they wanted.
- Children liked the types of play on offer especially outdoors, art and crafts and chilling out reading books and playing games.
- Staff knew when to intervene in children's play supporting them to regulate their emotions and resolve situations calmly.
- Children were leading their own play, supported by staff that were skilled at using observation to support and enhance children's play, learning and development.
- The children's personal plans were under review to ensure they recorded information about children's needs and a clear plan on how best the setting would support these.

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	4 - Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - 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.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The settings vision, values and aims was to ensure children were happy, well cared for and valued as individuals. There was a strong ethos placed on the benefits of play and this was evident throughout the setting. Children were provided the space and time to play, leading their own play experiences.

Staff were skilled communicators, responding to children's needs offering support and challenge. Children told us they were very happy with the play on offer, they liked being outside, art and crafts and the chillout room to draw, read books and games.

Leaders were working hard to create an environment for all those involved in the setting were confident sharing their views and shared the vision of the setting. To achieve this, they were planning a review of the service vision and aims, to ensure they reflected staff, children and family's expectations and aspirations. To further support parental engagement, it was part of the service improvement plan. We discussed ideas on how to achieve this making better use of the displays in the hallway. Providing parents with easy access to information or having interactive information boards to gather their views.

Leaders had a strong understanding of self-evaluation. They were starting to use the quality improvement framework for school age children to evaluate how well they were doing. They had started reflecting on the setting strengths and areas where improvements could be made. To support the settings plans for improvement further consideration could be given to the targets set. Reducing the breadth of these targets could help them better measure the positive impacts made.

There had been no new staff employed since the last inspection in October 2025. Staff did share they felt supported and welcomed the opportunities to gain qualifications with support from their peers and leaders. To further support staff development the provider recognised the need to improve the professional development reviews for staff. This process was currently under review.

Staff were deployed around the play spaces to supervise and support children's play. We had seen on occasion staff deployment impacting on children's play experiences. Consideration should be given to when the outside and inside spaces were open. For example, when two staff were present on return from school or end of session, all children were together in the same space. We suggested finding a solution to have both spaces open reducing the interruption to children's play. Leaders agreed to review the staff deployment during these times.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

Overall, we could see the improvements made since the last inspection in October 2025. The main playroom had been redesigned providing a more welcoming and open space. Children could freely move around the space self-selecting where they wanted to play. The new layout meant staff could supervise children more easily.

In relation to maintenance within the facilities, although improvements had been made, the kitchen and toilets could still be further improved. The provider should ensure all spaces used are well maintained including areas shared by other community groups. The kitchen could be further improved to make it more child friendly, so children could help with preparation of snacks. The toilets needed a deep clean or possible redecoration around high traffic areas and touch points.

The premises were secure and additional safety measures had been put in place, considering the age and stage of children attending. For example, by raising the height of the exit button. The provider shared to further enhance safety they would like to have direct access to garden.

The playrooms were free from clutter, creating a more suitable space for children to see clearly the materials in the playrooms. Creating a more respectful space, valuing children's right to be cared for in a well maintained, clean and tidy space. We discussed the chill-out room layout and design. For example, it being decorated in a calmer colour scheme, having less on walls to support children who would prefer a calming space to regulate their emotions.

In the main playroom resources were mostly stored in large plastic boxes, although these were clearly labelled with names of materials. Consideration should be given to adding a visual aid, supporting children who may not be at the stage to read the labels. Another consideration would be to have boxes where children can see what is inside.

Outside was mostly loose parts, which children really enjoyed using to build and create structures. We saw great den designs, children problem solving and good teamwork coming from this type of play. To further enhance the outdoor play and learning they could consider developing other types of play. We acknowledged play will change daily and we only seen outdoor play on day one of the inspection. We suggested offering cosy areas to maybe read and do art and crafts, activities the children told us they liked. Possibly introducing a more natural area with wildflowers to attract the insects and supporting children's curiosity and interest.

Staff observed children in the three play spaces and used findings to analyse outcomes for children. Their reflections supported them to extend and challenge children's thinking, enhancing the play and learning experiences. Staff should continue with plans to further develop their knowledge of play, challenging their thinking and creativity. In response the outcomes for children's play experiences could continue to thrive, helping them reach their potential.

Children told us they liked the play on offer especially being outdoors, being creative and chilling reading books and playing games. Further consultation with children was planned to gather their ideas and opinions. This could lead to the play experiences offered being enhanced through creating more inspirational play spaces centred on the needs and interests of children.

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.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

The setting promoted play as a essential and enjoyable activity that provides a safe space for exploration, self-discovery and a deeper understanding of the world. They worked well as a team to ensure they were supporting children's needs. They had created a space where children could feel confident, developed positive social skills, respect each other's views and worked together to achieve their goals.

Staff were skilled communicators. They knew when to intervene in children's play which supported children to regulate their emotions and resolve situations calmly. Staff positioned themselves nearby children. They welcomed children's interactions and joined in their play, responding to children's requests. Staff listened and responded sensitively to children's needs. They supported and recognised children's right to play and celebrated their successes. As a result, children were confident and proud of themselves and their successes.

Staff planned play experiences starting from an inspirational point which came from the children. Through regular observation staff highlighted children's current interests. These included different types of play such as rough and tumble, communication and role play. They linked play experiences to wellbeing indicators and play work mood descriptors. Staff recorded the play they observed including children's interactions, roles in the play if within a group, and they reflected on materials and their own roles. We found children were leading their play, supported by staff that were skilled at using observation to support and enhance children's play, learning and development.

Outdoor active play and loose parts supported children to play with their peers and problem solve, whilst having fun. The chill-out room offered space for quiet reading times and space to relax. The activity room was an open space for large construction and art and crafts. Children were having fun and pursuing interests at their own pace. Consolidating their learning in ways meaningful to them.

Children are supported to achieve — 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Staff were respectful, caring and kind to the children. They listened to children's voices and responded appropriately. Children were greeted warmly and given time to transition when collected from school. Children talked about their school day and their plans when back at the setting. Children shared that they felt safe and secure, as they knew the staff collecting them. They shared some days staff changed but they always knew them. Staff were familiar with safe practices for collection and transporting children to the setting.

A three-week snack menu was in place, staff confirmed children had been consulted in making menus. The children shared they liked the food options and were given opportunities to create menus. Most foods were healthy choices with an option of fruit being provided each day. Consideration should be given to the crisps and biscuits on the menu and diluting juice. It is recommended that children have water and milk with meals. If children have specific dietary needs and preference these should be recorded within their personal plans and agreed by all.

Children could be more involved in the preparation of snack; on the day we observed it to be very adult led.

All children seated at the same time, waiting to be served. Possible area that could be further developed to reduce the interruption to play and support children learn life skills. With some minor changes it might also reduce noise levels, for any child sensitive to this, snack time could be challenging. But snack was a very sociable time, was nicely organised with staff sitting with children chatting about their experiences.

Each child had a personal plan in place. These were currently under review and we agreed needed further development. The current plans recorded some information about needs but no clear plan on how best the setting would support these. When we spoke to staff, they were well informed about the children's needs and had a clear understanding of the strategies to support these. For example, being vigilant about possible triggers and personal preferences. We observed one child being supported on arrival by staff. They calmly used appropriate language to inform a child of the daily plan, giving reassurance when they could make decisions and choices. Another occasion a staff member used effective observation skills, knowing when to intervene in children's play to help them regulate their emotions. The service planned to have the new personal plans in place for August 2026.

We saw parents welcomed into the premises, staff having positive interactions, sharing information about children's experiences. We acknowledge Leaders had plans to further involve families in the setting. We discussed consultation with parents and families to ensure any future changes met their expectations and wishes.

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 help ensure children experience a clean and well maintained service, infection prevention and control measures should be improved. This should include, but not limited to, regular cleaning of spaces and ensuring there are enough resources to support effective handwashing.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

This area for improvement was made on 24 October 2025.

Action taken since then

Within the main playroom there had been a full review of the floor plan and play spaces. They had removed all the clutter and unnecessary items. The playroom was clearly visible for all staff. The resources were in labelled boxes for children to choose from. The kitchen, hand washing facilities and outdoor materials were found to be clean and well maintained.

This area for improvement had 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.

Detailed evaluations

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

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	4 - Good

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

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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