The Learning Zone
Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 July 2026

Service provided by:
Drury, Kathleen

Service provider number:
SP2012983330

Service no:
CS2012306848

About the service

The Learning Zone is a day care of children service which is situated in the Whiteinch area of Glasgow. The early learning and childcare service is in partnership with Glasgow City Council to provide commissioned places for children aged between three and five years and eligible two year olds.

The service can accommodate a maximum of 36 children not yet attending primary school of whom no more than 12 are under two years and no more than 10 are between two years and three years. At the time of our inspection there were a total of 24 children present on the first day and 25 children present on the second day.

The service has sole use of the upper level of a church hall. The premises comprises of two playrooms providing separate accommodation for children under two years and those two to five years. There is a secure outdoor area. There are changing and toilet facilities for children and office, catering and staff facilities. The service is close to schools, transport routes, shops and community services.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 and 15 July 2026. 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
- reviewed feedback from 10 parents and carers whose children attend the service
- reviewed feedback from 10 staff members employed in the service
- spoke with management and staff
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within the 'Children thrive and develop in quality spaces' section of this report.

Key messages

- Children were happy and confident, with friendships supporting children's wellbeing.
- Children's views influenced play experiences and environments, supporting engagement, independence and enjoyment in learning.
- The manager demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and led with developments that improved outcomes for children and their families.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes should be developed to support continuous improvement of the service.
- We identified continued improvements that would minimise infection risks and support children's health and wellbeing.
- Mealtimes were a relaxed, unhurried and sociable experience with staff supervising children, contributing to a safe mealtime experience.
- Staff knew their children and families well, creating a warm and welcoming environment.

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	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Leadership and management of staff and resources
We evaluated this quality indicator as good were several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

The services family handbook communicated their vision, values and aims. Observations confirmed the values of happiness, wellbeing, engagement, achievement, partnership and care were reflected in daily practice, contributing to a positive environment for children. We discussed with the manager reviewing their vision, values and aims in consultation with children, families and staff has the potential to further strengthen a sense of belonging and ensure they to continue to reflect the needs and aspirations of those who use the service.

The manager demonstrated a commitment to improvement. They were leading with changes to children's mealtimes, safe sleep practice, environments for children's care play and learning, personal plans and the recording of children's observations. Staff spoke positively about the changes and they were contributing to improvements. We observed the positive impact these developments were having to support improved outcomes for children.

Parents and families contributed to self-evaluation through the service's "Two Stars and a Wish" approach. This encouraged them to share strengths and suggest areas for improvement. We saw that feedback was acted upon and was also communicated through a "You Said, We Did" display. Children were also involved in identifying ways to improve play environments, with their suggestions influencing change. This demonstrated that the views of children and families were valued and used to support with improvements.

Improvements had been made to quality assurance processes and this was a positive start. The manager carried out audits and monitoring across a range of areas to include accidents and incidents, personal plans, children's mealtimes and staff Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration. This enabled the service to identify strengths and areas for improvement, supporting ongoing development and improved outcomes for children.

There was evidence that actions were being progressed to enhance outcomes for children and their families. We discussed with the manager these systems could be strengthened further to support improvements we identified. For example, medication, personal plans, accident and incidents, children's registration forms and staff recruitment records. As this has the potential to compromise children's care, safety and wellbeing, we have made an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1).

At the previous inspection we made a requirement to ensure staff were registered with the SSSC to ensure children were kept safe and protected from harm. Improvements had been made and the requirement had been met. For further information refer to 'Outstanding requirements' section of the report.

Safe recruitment checks were completed prior to staff taking up employment within the service. We discussed opportunities to strengthen staff recruitment records, including clearer recording of Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) information and interview processes.

A basic induction programme supported staff to develop an understanding of their roles, responsibilities and practice in meeting children's needs. Staff told us they felt confident seeking support from colleagues,

contributing to a welcoming and collaborative team culture. We discussed how the use of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) National Induction Resource could further strengthen induction arrangements and support staff to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to provide high-quality care and learning experiences for children.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure improved outcomes for children and their families, the provider should ensure that quality assurance systems are developed further to assess and improve the quality of the provision in line with best practice. This should include children's medication, personal plans, accident and incident records and staff safe recruitment records.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards, which state, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces — 4 - Good

Children experience high quality spaces
We evaluated this quality indicator as good were several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

Children were cared for in an environment that was bright, welcoming and clean. Indoor and outdoor environments were safe, secure and maintained for children supporting children's health, safety and wellbeing.

At the previous inspection we made areas for improvement to ensure children are cared for in a safe environment and infection control practices promote a safe environment for children. We observed improvements had been made, however further improvements should be made to infection control practices. As this has the potential to compromise children's health and wellbeing we have continued to make an area for improvement. For further information refer to 'Outstanding areas for improvements' section of the report.

The environment offered ample space for children to play independently or in groups, with cosy areas available for rest and relaxation. This supported children's health and wellbeing. Children were able to access experiences that reflected their interests and preferences.

Toys and resources were well organised and accessible supporting children's choice, curiosity and engagement in play. The service had invested in new resources, including natural materials, to enhance children's learning experiences. To further enrich play and learning opportunities, the service should continue to develop the use of natural resources and loose parts materials across both indoor and outdoor environments.

Outdoors, children engaged in positive risk taking and challenging play. The apparatus and materials provided opportunities for children to build their confidence, resilience and problem solving skills.

Improvements had been made to the outdoor environment, enhancing opportunities for children's play and learning while supporting their safety and wellbeing. Staff had identified further plans to develop these spaces, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement. The planned developments have the

potential to further enrich children's experiences and extend opportunities for learning and exploration outdoors.

Shelter was available within the older children's environment, providing protection from most weather conditions, ensuring children were comfortable and experiencing fresh air. This supported children's emotional wellbeing. We discussed with the manager that providing shelter within the younger children's garden would further enhance the outdoor environment, ensuring children across both areas can access outdoor experiences in a range of weather conditions.

Drinking water was available for children indoors and outdoors, promoting hydration and supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Playing, learning and developing
We evaluated this quality indicator as good were several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

Children were confident within their environments and had developed friendships that supported their social and emotional wellbeing. They were happy and engaged in a variety of experiences. Children demonstrated independence by leading their own play which supported their overall development.

All children had opportunities to play and learn outdoors in the fresh air, supporting their health and wellbeing. Older children engaged in imaginative and creative experiences. They explored mud and water, used wheeled toys to develop their physical skills and coordination and engaged in risky and challenging play on climbing equipment. These experiences supported children's confidence, physical development and enjoyment of learning outdoors.

Younger children used the slide to support their physical development and movement skills. They explored magnetic resources by stacking them, developing fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Children also engaged in imaginative and nurturing role play as they cared for and cuddled baby dolls, supporting creativity, communication and social development. Parents told us, "[Child] has such variety in the activities and has really developed a bond with the staff. I'm amazed how much painting [child] does with the nursery, which [child] loves," and "They make a big effort to put on activities that the children are interested in and that will help their development."

We discussed with the manager how opportunities for outdoor play could be further extended by enabling children to return outdoors more quickly after lunch. This would support children to make choices about where they play and allow outdoor experiences to be more responsive to their interests and preferences.

Staff were engaged in play with children, many interactions demonstrated responsiveness and connection. Some staff would benefit from further development of their ability to challenge and extend children's learning and play opportunities. Targeted professional development opportunities focusing on high quality interaction strategies have the potential to improve the quality of these engagements and enrich children's learning experiences.

Staff were planning for children's play and learning. Improvements had been made to planning processes, including the introduction of individual goals to support children's learning and progression. This was a positive start. Continued improvements could be made to planning processes to be more responsive to

children's interests and clearer links to curriculum guidelines to support the development of children's skills and progression. Some staff would benefit from professional learning to strengthen their understanding of child development and ensure experiences are consistently developmentally appropriate, meeting individual children's needs and supporting positive outcomes.

Online learning journals were used to support communication and share information of children's play, learning and development. Improvements had been made to the recording of information. Many observations clearly demonstrated children's skills, progress and learning and included the children's voice. The quality and consistency of observations remained inconsistent. Some entries were not linked to curriculum guidelines and when next steps were recorded these were not always meaningful. The manager recognised the ongoing development and had plans to further develop staff practice and promote greater consistency across the service.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Nurturing, care and support
We evaluated this quality indicator as good were several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

Children experienced care and learning routines delivered with warmth, kindness and compassion. Staff were nurturing and responsive, supporting children to feel safe and secure and to develop positive, trusting relationships with staff. Parents told us, 'The nursery is run with love. It has a relaxed, family feel. We feel very comfortable leaving our child in their care' and 'the staff in the nursery are all fabulous, always chatting away and so welcoming.'

At the previous inspection we made an area for improvement to ensure all children's sleep and mealtimes are safe. We observed improvements had been made. For further information refer to 'Outstanding areas for improvements' section of the report.

Mealtimes were relaxed, sociable and unhurried, with staff supervising and engaging children in meaningful conversations, contributing to a safe and positive mealtime experience. Children were encouraged to develop independence and responsibility through self-serving food and clearing away used items. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of children's individual dietary requirements, ensuring meals were appropriate and safe. This supported children's health, safety and overall wellbeing.

Management had made improvements to administration of medication records in line with 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' guidance. We reviewed medication within the service. We asked management to clearly label children's medication to be easily identifiable. The manager responded promptly during the inspection and implemented improvements to support children's health and wellbeing.

Personal plans were in place for all children, developed in partnership with families and reviewed regularly. Plans were relevant and responsive to children's current needs and changes over time. Improvements had been made to the quality of plans, with most now including individual goals and clear strategies to support children in achieving these. We made further suggestions to strengthen personal planning. All children with additional support needs should have clearly identified targets and risk assessments included where appropriate to support their development, health, safety and wellbeing. We were confident these improvements would be progressed.

During our review, we identified some plans were missing key information, including general practitioner and health visitor details. The manager responded promptly during the inspection and updated records to better support children's health and wellbeing.

Child protection procedures were in place and staff demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and respond appropriately to concerns. We discussed with the manager staff should undertake annual child protection training to refresh their knowledge and remain informed of current guidance and practice. We reviewed child protection records and found improvements had been made to children's chronologies. These now included details of communication with relevant stakeholders as well as the outcomes of actions taken. This supported more robust recording and strengthened safeguarding arrangements for children.

Management and staff had created a warm and welcoming environment supporting children and their families to feel valued. Families had opportunities to discuss their child's care and development both formally and informally. The service had systems in place to support communication both verbally and digitally. This contributed to fostering positive relationships, involvement and a sense of belonging.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 4th March 2026, the provider must ensure that children are safe and protected from harm. To do this, the provider must at a minimum ensure there is a robust system in place to check that all staff renew their Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) annually.

This is in order to comply with section 7(1)(a) and section 8(1)(a) of the Health and Care (Staffing)(Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state, '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 requirement was made on 4 December 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement
All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and where required, had renewed their annual declaration. Management undertook regular audits of SSSC registration status to ensure staff maintained registration and completed their annual renewals within the required timescales.

The requirement had been met. Please refer to 'Leadership' section for further information.

Met - within timescales

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 ensure children are protected from the potential spread of infection, the provider should ensure infection control practices promote a safe environment for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17) and '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 4 December 2025.

Action taken since then

Furniture, equipment and soft furnishings were clean. Some areas of the service had been decorated.

Items in nappy changing and toilet areas were stored appropriately and nappy changing mats were in good condition.

Children and staff washed their hands with soap and water before mealtimes. All children should also be supported to wash their hands after eating.

We observed staff wiping children's noses while outdoors without cleaning their hands afterwards. We made suggestions to support with cleaning of hands when outdoors to minimise the spread of infection.

The area for improvement had not been met. Please refer to 'Children thrive and develop in quality spaces' section for further information.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's health, safety and wellbeing, children should be cared for in a safe environment both indoors and outdoors. Robust and dynamic risk assessments should take place and action taken to mitigate risks to children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state, 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17) and '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 4 December 2025.

Action taken since then

Indoor and outdoor environments were safe for children. Staff identified hazards, such as faulty equipment and appropriate maintenance reporting systems were in place. Timely action was taken to support children's safety and wellbeing.

Risk assessments of the outdoor environment were completed before children accessed the space, contributing to the environment remaining safe and secure.

Staff demonstrated use of dynamic risk assessment, supporting children to play safely while also benefiting from positive risk-taking experiences outdoors.

The area for improvement had been met. Please refer to 'Children thrive and develop in quality spaces' section for further information.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's safety and wellbeing, the manager and staff should ensure all children's sleep and mealtime experiences are safe and reflect best practice guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS1.19) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 4 December 2025.

Action taken since then

New cots had been purchased and children were supported to sleep in cots or on sleep mats appropriate to their age and stage, promoting their comfort and safety. Regular checks of sleeping children were carried out to support their wellbeing.

Staff were sitting with children and providing supervision throughout mealtimes until all children had finished eating. This contributed to a safe, calm and positive mealtime experience for children.

The area for improvement had been met. Please refer to 'Children are supported' section for further information.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

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

Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

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

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