

Fenwick Early Childhood Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 March 2023

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2019375119

About the service

Fenwick Early Childhood Centre is a day care of children service. The service is registered for 29 children from three years of age who are not yet attending primary school. It operates from premises adjacent to Fenwick Primary School, in the village of Fenwick in East Ayrshire. The service is provided by East Ayrshire Council and is managed by the head teacher of Fenwick Primary School, supported in the daily management of the service by a deputy head teacher and a senior practitioner.

Children have access to two linking playrooms and their own secure outdoor space. Children can freely move between indoors and outdoors. The centre is located in a semi-rural village and is within walking distance of local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place on 28 February 2023. To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about the service. This included, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed practice and daily life;
- spoke with children using the service;
- reviewed documents;
- spoke with the manager and the staff team; and
- emailed parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

Staff were welcoming and friendly with an enabling attitude and knew the children very well.

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests and life experiences.

The indoor and outdoor environments were sensitively structured and took account of children's stages of development and learning.

Children's and families' views were actively sought to inform the development of the setting.

The staff knew the families and worked to ensure every family was welcomed and valued.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

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 all very happy, settled and having fun as they played alongside or with friends. We observed that positive relationships had been formed between staff and the children who had fun together. Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. This contributed to children feeling happy and secure. There was a great deal of chatter and laughter between the children and the staff. We saw staff being very nurturing, taking time to listen to and respond to children, and offering comfort, cuddles and reassurance when needed. This contributed to positive attachments being formed and children having a sense of belonging and feeling valued.

Children and staff enjoyed eating together in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere, ensuring a caring and positive social experience. Some staff sat with the children, and this promoted positive social habits, including children being supported to self-serve. Children were offered nutritious meal choices which took account of current good practice guidance 'Setting the Table'. One parent commented, "Meals are excellent, my child is trying new things and I'm always pleased to see how well she's eaten. As a busy working mum, the variety of meals is great and definitely takes a lot of pressure off to make exciting dinners."

Staff were welcoming and friendly with an enabling attitude and knew the children very well. To support children to be happy and confident, staff had effectively used personal plans to enhance care, support and learning opportunities. Personal plans provided information to support individual children and were used consistently by staff. This meant that all children were respected and valued as individuals.

There was a strong commitment to work in partnership with families when developing personal plans and support strategies. This ensured that children received consistent and appropriate levels of care and support. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time. The service used a blog and learning journals, which supported good opportunities for communication and information sharing between families and the service. Parents were very positive about the level of information they received at collection time and stated that they were actively encouraged to give feedback and ask questions. Parents described staff as very approachable, "Very friendly, caring and supportive, and attentive." One parent stated, "The blog is regularly updated, as is their learning journal. We always get a wee update at collection and really good that we can see what they have eaten for the day."

Quality indicator: 1.3 Play and learning.

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 meaningfully and actively involved in leading their own play and learning, through a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences, that promote children's choice and independence. Parents told us: "My child loves attending the service and is always so excited to go. She loves playing with all her friends, playing outside and drawing pictures."; and, "My daughter wakes up every morning asking to go to nursery. She is also excited and walks in so happy. She loves playing with the toys, lots of art work,

outside play and loves when they cook. She was so proud when she got to make pizza." The variety of experiences and opportunities has enriched their play and learning.

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests and life experiences. Children were happy and confident during play and were progressing well in their learning and development. We saw staff facilitate experiences that sparked children's curiosity and extended their individual interests. One child told us, "I like to play with my friends, we are digging for treasure." Another child shared, "I like painting outside." As a result, children were progressing well, and were happy and confident.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through strong connections to their own and wider communities. The children go for walks, visit the park and have made connection with the local estate access to a green space. They also accessed the school garden. The staff and children have delivered daffodils to adults being cared for in a local care home and local residents in the village. To extend this experience and continue to link with other community groups, the staff and children are planning to grow sunflowers to deliver in the future. This highly responsive approach ensured children were developing a broad range of lifelong learning skills.

We observed very good quality play, learning and development opportunities for children. Children were empowered to be fully involved in their play and learning through the skilled interactions of staff. The manager and staff provided a stimulating, challenging and creative setting where children could engage in self-directed play. Children played independently and in small groups. We observed imaginative play where children dressed up and played that they were invisible. Staff joined in, pretending that they could not see the children.

The play experiences on offer supported the development of a wide range of language, literacy and numeracy skills. Outdoors, children enjoyed playing a traffic light game on the range of bikes, scooters and tricycles. Staff intervened when needed to support and enhance the children's play.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

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.

The setting was very comfortable and welcoming, and furnishings were of a high standard, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Children had ample space to play and explore their surroundings. We observed children enjoying a story in the quiet area which had a comfy sofa, wicker dome with bean bags, sensory lights, and cushions.

The indoor and outdoor environments were sensitively structured and took account of children's stages of development and learning. Spaces reflect children's current interests and curiosities, with appropriate resources and materials to support learning. For example, children's current interests were bugs and mini beasts, so there was lots of different kinds of foam and plastic insects in the water tray. Children asked lots of questions, so the adult supported the children in using the tablet to answer these questions. The block play area had a display of construction related images at children's height and the children watched films about buildings and structures. There was also evidence in the floor books of how this had supported the children learning. A parent shared, "Every day she has access to the outdoor area and really enjoys it."

The playrooms were decorated in neutral colours which promoted calm, natural spaces for the children. The manager and staff team shared their understanding of the Education Scotland 2020 document 'Realising the Ambition: Being me', guidance, that had supported the team to set up the environment. Both playrooms made good use of the space available to encourage children's independence, the children could access and choose activities and resources freely. A parent told us, "I think the play resources are fantastic. I feel that my child's imaginative play had developed at home too."

The indoor and outdoor environments took account of the age and stage of the children and encouraged their interests with appropriate resources and equipment to support their play and learning. Children were confident and relaxed as they moved around the playrooms and outside.

Infection control measures were in place throughout the service to minimise the spread of infection. Children were reminded and supported where needed to wash their hands. We saw staff wash their hands often, role modelling for the children the importance of good hygiene to keep children and staff safe and well.

Staff worked well together to identify and remove risks to children within the setting, both indoors and outdoors. For example, walkie talkies were used by staff outdoors to share information with staff inside. Risk assessments were in place and children had helped to write the outdoor risk assessment. This supported children to understand and manage their own risks through play.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

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.

The management team promoted a positive attitude to change and recognised the importance of including others in the development of a shared vision. Staff felt well supported by the management team and shared that they were approachable, and very hands on. This resulted in a strong ethos across the team and service which clearly demonstrated the service's aims and objectives for children to reach their full potential. Parents also felt included and one commented, "Forms become available through the app. There have been several consultations since my wee girl started in December."

Robust quality assurance systems, including informal and formal monitoring was in place and carried out by the senior management team. Management and staff had a very good understanding of Education Scotland's 2016 document, 'How good is our early learning and childcare', and the Care Inspectorate's 2022 document, 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare'. Management and staff told us they used these documents as an evaluation tool to reflect and support assessment and improvement within the service.

Children and families' views were actively sought to inform the development of the setting. We observed parents coming into the setting at pickup time and they shared the service was doing an amazing job. One parent said, "Open communication is always welcome. Any concerns raised are taken on board, they are eager to help and actively make changes to help the child."

A comprehensive improvement plan was available, and stakeholders told us they were asked to contribute

to this, and their views were used to implement change. This supported a culture of collaboration where all stakeholders felt valued and listened to.

Policies and procedures were in place which underpinned the service and supported staff practice. These were reviewed annually to ensure they continued to follow best practice and remained relevant to the service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

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.

There was a strong positive ethos within the service. Children were valued, trusted and supported through supervised child-led play. The staff were extremely skilled, dedicated and nurturing. They were all enthusiastic and committed to providing a positive experience for the children in their care. Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. They were very warm, caring and sensitive in their approach and demonstrated positive teamwork, which promoted a happy and secure environment for children. They were responsive and respectful of children during interactions and play, which supported children to feel safe and secure.

Staff had the opportunity to take part in training and gain qualifications. They were enthusiastic about continuing with their professional development. They were able to discuss the impact this had on their practice and outcomes for children. For example, there was a Communication Champion with the knowledge of how to support children with speech delays.

An induction programme for all staff was in place and this contributed to staff feeling secure and supported in their role. This was developing a positive, supportive and inclusive ethos across the service.

There was a very good mix of skills, knowledge, and experience within the staff team. Staff were supportive of each other and communicated well most of the day; however, at one point in the day a staff member left the playroom without communicating to the other staff and children were in an area unseen. We have asked the management and staff to make sure this does not happen again. (See area for improvement 1.)

The staff knew the families and worked to ensure every family was welcomed and valued. Staff had regular communication with parents and had established positive relationships which enhanced children's experiences and promoted a partnership approach. We observed this at pick up time when younger siblings were talking to staff and were down at their level as well as talking to parents.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider, manager and staff must support the health welfare and safety needs of children and ensure staff communicate to other staff before leaving an area.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15); and

'I use a service and organisation that is well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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