

Auchinleck Early Childhood Centre

Day Care of Children

Dalsalloch Road
Auchinleck
Cumnock
KA18 2BU

Telephone: 01290 421 260

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 March 2024

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2003015809

About the service

Auchinleck Early Childhood Centre is a daycare for children service provided by East Ayrshire Council in the village of Auchinleck. The service has sole use of the premises and outdoor play area. It is currently registered to provide care to a maximum of 79 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 15 are aged 2 to under 3, and no more than 64 are aged 3 to those not yet attending primary school.

Children can freely move between indoors and a secure outdoor area. 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 carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate, on Monday, 18 March 2024, between 09:30 and 17:15 and Tuesday, 19 March 2024, between 09:30 and 14:15.

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 10 children using the service;
- reviewed documents;
- spoke with the head teacher and staff; and
- emailed 11 parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

Children enjoyed a relaxed and social experience at mealtimes.

Children were having fun playing together and making friends.

Children were cared for in an environment that was bright, clean and welcoming.

Strong relationships had been built between the service, children and families.

Staff worked well together to support positive outcomes for children.

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?	4 - 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

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.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support.

Children benefitted from warm, caring and nurturing interactions with staff. Strong, positive attachments had been formed. Children and families had the opportunity to visit prior to starting the service. Staff collected a variety of information to support children's individual preferences and wellbeing needs which supported the settling-in process. One parent told us, "Staff are very nurturing and caring and know my child inside out". This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Staff were respectful in their approach and promoted children's rights. They allowed children to direct their own play but offered support to extend play when needed. They respectfully asked children if they could join in play or sit with them. This supported children to feel valued and make independent choices.

Staff knew children very well and were knowledgeable about their needs and preferences. Children were provided with additional support when needed, and staff worked collaboratively with other agencies. As a result, children received care and support that was right for them.

Personal plans were in place for children, and staff used the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators to support their knowledge of children's individual wellbeing needs. Staff had considered and documented what strategies they would put in place to support individual children. We discussed with management, the importance of reviewing the quality of the next steps and reviews. This will support staff to meet children current needs.

Mealtimes were sociable and relaxed. Children were encouraged to self-serve, and staff sat with them and engaged in quality conversations. Water was available throughout the day to ensure children were hydrated. This ensured that children's health and wellbeing were well supported.

Children were kept safe and well. Medication was stored securely, and most medication records were accurately completed. We identified one medication record that had not been clearly updated; the management team immediately rectified this. Accidents and incidents were recorded and appropriately shared with parents. These processes supported children's overall wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning.

We observed children having fun, playing together, and building friendships. It was evident that staff valued the importance of play and shared with parents. One parent told us, "Key worker meetings detail what my child is interested in and what learning has taken place. I have access to her learning journal, which is updated each week, and I can see the learning and progression." A good balance of planned and spontaneous experiences was on offer. For example, children could choose where they wanted to play and what they wanted to play with. Staff supported children's play, based on their interests. As a result, children were learning through play.

Resources within play zones, and children's play experiences, developed their skills in language, literacy, and

numeracy. For example, a variety of books were available to children, and number games with dice were enjoyed indoors and outdoors. Children participated in songs and rhymes which supported language development.

Curriculum trackers monitored children's progress in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. These supported staff to have an understanding of children's abilities and develop learning experiences suited to children's individual needs and stages of development. Skilled staff used observations and questioning to effectively support, scaffold and extend children's play, learning and development. As a result, children were supported to reach their full potential. Staff had recently begun to share children's learning and interests with families through online learning journals. This encouraged families to be part of their children's learning journey.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were cared for in an environment that was bright, well ventilated, clean and homely. Staff had carefully considered the layout of the playrooms and created spacious zones that invited children to play. Play spaces were centred around children's needs and reflected their current interests. Parents were invited to the playrooms where the children's achievements and aspects of their home life were displayed and celebrated. This made children feel more connected to their environment and conveyed to them and their families that they mattered.

Staff understood the importance of sleep for children's overall development. Children's sleep routines were reflective of their individual needs and family's wishes. Some areas for children were positioned in busy areas which did not support children to rest when needed. We discussed this with management who agreed to develop cosier sleep areas. This would provide children with an appropriate area to rest, sleep or self-regulate their emotions.

Some infection prevention and control (IPC) measures were in place to keep children safe. For example, tables were cleaned before and after meals. Staff should be mindful of washing their hands after touching the floor. Regular monitoring would allow management to identify issues and ensure a consistent approach in relation to infection prevention and control.

Staff accessed the wider community to go on local walks and learn about planting and growing, for example at their local gardening group and Dumfries House. This supported children to learn about how plants grow and helped them develop a sense of belonging in their local community.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

A shared vision, values, and aims reflected the aspirations of children, staff, and families within the service.

They put the community at the heart of everything they did, and children and families had been involved in creating the shared vision. This meant that staff knew what was important to them and helped them meet the needs of children and families.

The enthusiastic team was committed to delivering high quality experiences for children and families. Staff spoke positively about their leadership roles within the service. These included Eco-schools, where they had gained their green flag and planned to carry out a community litter pick. One member of staff told us they felt "very supported and trusted to take on leadership roles and to work towards their degree." This supported staff to develop their skills and work well together as a team to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

The service valued the strong relationships they had built with families. Family and children's views were regularly sought through daily conversations, events, online learning journals, newsletters and evaluation and feedback sheets. One parent told us, "I am able to document and upload learning from home. I have participated in stay and play sessions which are run well, and I can see my child has a nurturing relationship with her key worker and all other staff." This meaningful engagement contributed to a culture of continuous improvement.

Management and staff regularly reviewed their practice to ensure that children experienced high quality care, play and learning. They reflected on what they did well and identified what they could improve. As a result, improvements were evident in the service, for example strengthening links within the local community and parental engagement. Staff used good practice guidance to measure their progress and consider what they needed to develop. This supported them to deliver high quality experiences for children.

Good quality assurance processes such as regular monitoring and self-evaluation ensured that any issues were quickly identified and improvements were made. For example, the service regularly monitored and reflected on the environment, children's experiences, and staff practice. This ensured positive outcomes for children and families.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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.

Quality Indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment.

Staff were deployed in play zones to support children's play and learning. They had a very good mix of skills, knowledge and experience, and worked well together to ensure that children were fully supported during play. Staff were adept at identifying and utilising each other's strengths and interests. This supported positive role modelling between staff and encouraged staff to build respectful and supportive relationships with each other. This helped create a positive ethos for children and families.

The management team consulted with staff to identify their leadership roles, based on their interests and strengths. Staff members undertook frequent training and shared their knowledge with colleagues. As a result, children were cared for by a highly motivated and skilled team of professionals who felt valued in their roles.

The management team was highly supportive of staff and covered any planned or unplanned absences. It was clear during our observations that children were comfortable and familiar with the management team.

One parent commented, 'my child has built a strong bond with her key worker but also all other staff. Management is visible and present at all times.' This meant that children felt safe and were always cared for by staff who knew them well.

Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day. Staff breaks were well planned and supported by staff who provided lunchtime cover. Staff absences were well managed, with the senior leadership team able to provide support if required. This ensured minimal disruption to children's play, learning, and routine.

All staff told us they felt very supported by their management team and colleagues. New staff took part in an induction to support their learning. Mentors were in place for new staff and staff when they changed rooms. One member of staff told us, "We are a fantastic staff team. We all work together to support each other in the setting and have become like a big family. There is always someone there to help you if you need it." This ensured staff felt supported and understood their roles and responsibilities and resulted in positive outcomes for children.

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 improve access to personal care for children in the three to five age group, the provider should ensure the nappy changing area meets best practice guidance. The damp patch on the ceiling should also be investigated and repaired.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2 - A safe environment and Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 1 December 2017.

Action taken since then

The nappy changing facility has been improved and is in line with best practice guidance 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.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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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