

Braehead Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
18 April 2024

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003017390

About the service

Braehead Early Years Centre is located in Ayr, South Ayrshire. It is located in three classrooms within Braehead Primary School. The service is provided by South Ayrshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a daycare of children's service for a maximum of 58 children, aged 2 to not yet of an age to attend primary school, at any one time. Of those 58 no more than 14 are aged 2 to under 3.

Children aged 3-5 years have access to two joined playrooms and a secure outdoor space. Children aged 2-3 years have access to a smaller playroom. Older children can at times throughout the day freely move between indoors and outdoors. Younger children have access to an enclosed outdoor space in the school quadrant. The centre is located within walking distance of a local shops, parks and amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 and 18 April 2024 between 08:30 and 16:00. We gave feedback to the service onsite on 18 May 2024. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this 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 and spoke with several children using the service
- sent out a family questionnaire and received six responses
- spoke with three families face-to-face or by telephone call
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were responsive to children's individual needs.
- Key improvements had been made following the previous inspection visit in May 2023.
- A strong management team had high aspirations for children, and their families, which was promoted by a shared vision.
- Children enjoyed an environment that was clean, warm and well laid-out.
- Staff placed importance on providing children and their families with a positive experience.
- The service provider had supported the service to make improvements for children in Braehead, Ayr.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and caring interactions to support their wellbeing. Most staff were proactive in supporting children with comfort and reassurance when needed, which contributed to children feeling secure in their experiences. Most staff were responsive to children's individual needs. Staff cuddled and comforted children and responded if a child became upset. Most staff were following cues from children and recognised when a child needed support. This resulted in warm relationships between children and staff.

Overall, staff knew the care and support needs, preferences and routines for the majority of the children attending. Some effective use of strategies to support self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal skills had been developed. All staff should continue to embed this in their everyday practice. We observed temporary senior staff members using Lego to calm children's emotions, and using respectful interactions to gauge children's feelings in a child-friendly manner. For example, "Are you a thumbs up today?" or "Are you a bit in the middle?" These strategies being embedded across the service will help children to build resilience and express themselves with confidence.

Since the last inspection, staff had accessed updated training in child protection. The staff we spoke to were confident in their role in safeguarding children. Chronologies for children had been established, and staff knew where these were. As a result, children were safe and protected.

Written personal planning information was in place. Children's personal plans reflected the child's needs and the strategies required to meet these needs. As a consequence, staff had sufficient knowledge of the specific needs of the children attending. A new quick glance sheet for staff who were new to the service had been developed, this allowed new staff to access key information about children quickly and effectively. This should continue to be developed. We also asked the service to consider ways to ensure parents were informed of the staff who were caring for their child, and when this changed how parents could be kept up to date.

Children experienced improved mealtimes. The leadership team had identified that there was scope to further develop the lunch experience to be more social, relaxed and a positive atmosphere. Children's independence was being encouraged through opportunities such as, preparing snack and self-serving. This should continue to be developed, however we observed that this was beginning to help build confidence and life skills. Children and staff enjoyed eating and chatting together at snack time, which promoted good eating habits and contributed to the development of early language skills.

The service had recently experienced a change in staff, as a result parental engagement sessions were being re-established. We saw and heard how these will continue to have a positive effect for families in Braehead Early Years Centre. One parent told us, "There is always someone to talk to at the start and end of the day. I can come to stay and play."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were observed to be having fun and were engaged in play and learning. Children were beginning to benefit from a balance of planned and spontaneous activities. This will continue to be enhanced by the new temporary senior staff that had recently been supporting the service. Some children had the opportunity to lead their own play and learning with support from staff. One parent commented, "My child has come on leaps and bounds. My child is more caring and polite. The nursery works in partnership with me."

A variety of play experiences was being introduced to develop children's imagination and curiosity. Continuing to develop play and learning experiences for all children had been identified by the senior management team and service provider as an area for improvement for 2024/25. This was an area for improvement at the previous inspection visit in May 2023 and remains unmet (see What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection).

Tracking of children's development was in place but was not consistent for all children. Management agreed that they would continue to monitor and help staff to develop their skills in this area to ensure children's play and learning needs were met.

The service was in the process of moving to a different digital platform. A period of change was being experienced. The new learning journals will help share children's progress with parents and help to make them more involved in their children's learning.

All children over three-years-old had access to a small outdoor area. The service provider has plans to extend this space. Children free flowed in and out throughout the session. The outdoor space had been developed since the last inspection visit and some stimulating resources had been introduced to develop children's play and learning experiences. Staff commented that they felt this continued to be a work in progress and was an area they were proud of developing. We discussed with management that they should continue to support this development. Younger children were more limited in their access to outdoors. They did not have direct access to an outdoor space, however, they did access the courtyard in the school. We discussed with the headteacher how this area could be developed to offer exciting and fun activities for younger children outdoors.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Following the previous inspection in May 2023, the service had developed the environment considerably. New floor coverings had been installed. The playrooms had been reconfigured and the layout was more conducive to play and learning experiences. Door security had been reviewed and effective security was evident.

Children were cared for in rooms which were warm and bright. Playrooms were comfortably furnished and had some cosy areas for children to relax and rest. The resources available were appropriate to children's needs and stages of development. The playrooms and outdoors would benefit from more resources which support children's interests and needs. Staff shared with us that they felt that more suitable resources would help them better meet children's needs.

Staff ensured that children were accounted for at all times and used a register and white board to note when children left and entered the service. Staff were aware of potential risks and worked together to remove these. Risk assessments were in place which helped to ensure children were cared for in a safe environment. We saw some good examples of children being encouraged to assess risks for themselves. Management should continue to monitor and risk assess the environments to ensure the safety of children using the service.

We reviewed the infection prevention and control procedures and found some positive changes had been developed. Staff should continue to be vigilant that effective hand washing procedures are followed and infection risks reduced, wherever possible. For example, ensuring soap is available at all handwashing sinks and that hands are properly washed after helping children blow their noses.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

The senior management team was welcoming, approachable and engaged well with the inspection process. Parents shared with us that they found management to be supportive. One parent commented: "I think the help from the staff, especially the headteacher, with my concerns about my child have been brilliant."

A service improvement plan was in place which identified strengths and areas for improvement within the service. This had been developed in partnership with staff. As part of the quality assurance process, staff had evaluated the service which helped to develop the areas of priority for the improvement plan. We discussed with management that parents and children should be more involved in the quality assurance and improvement of the service. This would help give them a feeling of belonging and an understanding of the improvement focus for the setting.

Regular room meetings gave staff the opportunity to discuss any issues and share information regarding children within each room. Staff had leadership roles which helped them to develop their skills and responsibility within the service. One-to-one staff appraisals with management helped to identify staff training needs and gave them the opportunity to reflect on their practice.

We reviewed the monitoring and auditing procedures within the service and could see that this was beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes for children and their families. These should continue to be developed.

The service worked collaboratively with other professionals to support children and meet their needs. We heard examples of very good working relationships and communication with agencies. They highlighted the important role the service played in helping to create and maintain relationships with families. Working with outside agencies helped staff to develop strategies to give children the care and support they needed.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

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

During our inspection, we observed that there were enough staff to meet ratios and the needs of the children. We acknowledged that there had been staff changes recently and staff absences had impacted upon the continuity of care for the children. Management were sometimes required to cover for staff on the floor to ensure children's needs were met. Three senior staff had been temporarily recruited to lead improvements in the service. We asked the service provider and headteacher to consider how this benefit could be captured and future proofed to ensure continued quality experiences and outcomes for children.

Staff communicated well with each other when moving areas or when children were moving between areas. Staff were responsible for identified areas within rooms and were responsible for experiences in these areas. This meant that there was a greater variety of play and learning opportunities for children to participate in throughout the day. Staff managed the environments well and ensured that children were accounted for and engaged in play.

Staff told us that they felt one of the strengths of the service was the team that had been developed and the support they offered each other. One staff member commented: "The staff have good communication skills and work well together, supporting each other throughout the working day and at times support is always there."

Although at an early stage, the service benefited from a mix of skills and experience within the staff team which meant that children will be able to receive a variety of play and learning experiences as the staff team embeds itself.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 18 September 2023, the provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Effectively plan the environment to ensure that it offers calm, cosy spaces that children can independently access for rest or sleep.

b) Increase staff awareness of child development to recognise when children may require to rest.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes" (HSCS 5.18) and "I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes" (HSCS 5.22).

This requirement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Improved environment layout. Training had been undertaken to improve staff awareness of child development.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 18 September 2023, the provider must ensure that the environment is welcoming for children and families, and supports children to reach their full potential through high quality play and learning experiences.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure that:

a) They improve the learning environment to ensure that all children have access to appropriate, organised and well-presented play resources. This should include, but not be limited to, open-ended resources.

b) Staff should demonstrate an understanding of child development and provide appropriate play opportunities that support children to make progress in their learning.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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 requirement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Environment and resources have been developed. Layout had been re-considered and is a more effective use of space. Safeguarding awareness had been developed. Chronologies were in place for children who required them.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

By 18 September 2023, the provider must ensure children's health, welfare and safety. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure that:

- a) The environment is safe and suitable for children to play, rest and toilet.
- b) Effective handwashing is taking place, and modelled by staff, when required such as meal and snack times.
- c) Staff are knowledgeable and competent in relation to assessing and addressing risks.
- d) Management have oversight to ensure they can identify and address gaps in infection prevention and control practices and risk assessments.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is safe and secure" (HSCS 5.19).

This requirement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

This requirement has been fully met.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 4

By 18 September 2023, the provider must put effective quality assurance systems in place to ensure children receive high-quality care and support. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) They implement the action plan that has been devised and ensure there is sustained improvement as a result.
- b) And, make certain that staff have effective regular monitoring and supervision support meetings which afford them opportunities to be actively involved in the improvement process.
- c) An appraisal system is rolled out to capture all staff's vision, values, skills and interests. In turn these should be utilised, monitored and supported to make positive and effective changes to the nursery.
- d) A clear and manageable system for self-evaluation, auditing and monitoring is implemented for all areas of the service and that it results in effective change.
- e) Systems are aligned to best practice guidance to support the manager and staff to drive forward and sustain improvements.
- f) That staff are fully involved in the quality assurance process to ensure they feel valued and respected.

g) Children and their families are meaningfully involved and can influence positive change in the service through trusting relationships with staff and managers on all levels.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) and (d) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "As a child, I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance systems" (HSCS 4.19) and "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (HSCS 4.23).

This requirement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Quality assurance systems had been developed and were beginning to have a positive effect on the service. Some staffing issues have been remedied temporarily. However, the service provider is aware of this and supportive.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 5

By 18 September 2023, the provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Develop staff's understanding of their role in safeguarding children.
- b) Ensure that staff have access to key information about the children they are caring for.
- c) Ensure that chronologies are available to staff who are supporting children.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I am protected from harm because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing, that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm" (HSCS 3.21).

This requirement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Safeguarding training has been accessed. Staff were confident in their role of protecting children. We saw chronologies were in place for children who required them.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 6

By 18 September 2023, children must benefit from staff who have undertaken professional development that links closely to enhanced outcomes for Braehead children and their families.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Provide staff with additional support to recognise, and take accountability for, their learning and development needs, in order that sustained improvements are made in the nursery.
- b) Ensure professional learning is well planned, reviewed and identifies gaps in knowledge.
- c) Encourage and empower staff to use this learning to improve their practice and consider the impact of their learning on improving outcomes for children.
- d) Provide, through recorded monitoring and supervision, effective feedback to staff to enable them to develop and improve through reflective practice.
- e) Ensure improvements are made for children to experience high quality play and learning opportunities that reflect their needs and interests.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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

This requirement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Staff had accessed support and training. Clear improvements had been made. Sustaining this in the future has been identified.

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 improve the quality of children's mealtimes, staff should ensure the environment and location are well-planned and promote a sense of belonging and support social interactions. Staff should ensure mealtimes are served in a relaxed, calm, pleasurable and safe environment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I can enjoy unhurried snacks and meal times in as relaxed and atmosphere as possible" (HSCS 1.35).

This area for improvement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken since then

Improvement was evident.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Planning and record keeping should support staff to plan and provide meaningful experiences to meet children's needs. To achieve this, personal plans should be consistently recorded and contain quality information pertinent to each child. Personal plans should identify the health, safety and welfare needs of each child and how they will be met.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15), and "My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 1.23).

This area for improvement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken since then

Personal plans and learning journals were in place.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To improve the quality of children's experiences, staff should ensure that children are meaningfully involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences. Children's choice should be promoted, and their learning and development extended through skilful staff interactions and well-developed play spaces.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors" (HSCS 1.25).

This area for improvement was made on 18 July 2023.

Action taken since then

Although considerable improvement across the service, this area requires to continue to be considered. The headteacher had already identified this as a key area for improvement on their plan for 2024/25.

This area for improvement has not 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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