

Reay ELC Day Care of Children

Reay Primary School
Reay
Thurso
KW14 7RE

Telephone: 01847811550

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 May 2024

Service provided by:
CALA Direct Management Services

Service provider number:
SP2010011106

Service no:
CS2022000229

About the service

Reay ELC is a care service registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 15 children from age two years to not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than five are aged two years to under three years. Reay ELC is provided by CALA Direct Management Services.

The nursery is located in the village of Reay, close to the town of Thurso. The setting is provided in a purpose built building, situated in the grounds of Reay primary school. Children have access to a large playroom including cloakroom area, toilets and an enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 and 22 May 2024. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with four children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from six families;
- spoke with five staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents; and
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and caring approaches to support their overall wellbeing, which contributed to feeling secure.
- Approaches to observation and planning did not always support children to reach their full potential.
- Effective infection prevention and control procedures contributed to reducing the risk of possible spread of infection.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were being developed, to highlight areas for improvement.
- Staff deployment was very effective, which meant that children's care and support needs were met.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and caring approaches to support their overall wellbeing. Staff responded to children's cues, regularly checking in with children who were playing on their own, or new to the setting. They supported children to manage their emotions. This supported children to feel safe and secure. One parent commented 'The staff are very friendly and always have great communication with us. They are all very caring towards the kids.'

Mealtimes were calm and unhurried. Children had opportunities to develop their independence skills, such as pouring drinks, cutting food, collecting their own crockery and cutlery and tidying away. Staff sat with children and were focused on them, should an emergency such as choking occur. They recognised the importance of these daily routines in strengthening relationships, using this time to support children's developing language and communication skills. As a result, children benefited from a positive social experience. Children were able to access fresh water at all times which contributed to them keeping hydrated.

Personal planning information was used effectively to support children. Parents are invited to review personal care plans termly. One parent told us "We're regularly invited to review their personal plan and asked what areas we feel (my child) needs support with as part of their development.' Children's individual needs were considered, which meant that children received care and support that was right for them, at the right time.

Staff were working with other professionals, for example, speech and language therapists. This meant that relevant strategies were being developed to ensure positive outcomes. Where strategies had been developed, these were being used in practice to support children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children were having fun as they played with their peers or alone. However, we found that, on occasion, children's play experiences were interrupted to undertake adult directed activities. Some staff misread cues from children who were happily engaged in play on their own, interrupting play. This reduced children's opportunities to lead their own play and learning, and resulted in missed opportunities to support creativity. We discussed this with the management team, who agreed to review the flow of the day, to support children to have longer periods of play.

Most staff supported children's developing skills through their interactions. For example, reading stories at an appropriate pace and giving children time to respond to questions, supporting developing literacy skills. Some staff introduced song into play which supported children's developing communication and vocabulary skills. Children's developing problem solving skills and imagination were supported through the use of loose parts, both inside and outside. This contributed to children learning life long skills.

Planning approaches were responsive to children's interests. Staff were confident in extending children's interests through creative approaches, incorporating these into intentional planning. Floor books recorded play experiences and were shared with families who were welcome to contribute. Children were encouraged to share personal achievements, which contributed to their growing sense of self esteem.

However the quality of observations was not consistent. Many observations were descriptive and did not record the skills being learnt. Staff were in the early stages of developing effective processes to track children's progress. Information gathered was not yet being used to plan appropriate experiences to support children to consolidate their learning. This meant that not all children were supported to reach their potential (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children to achieve, the provider should improve the approach and skills of staff in relation to planning for children's learning and tracking and monitoring their progress. This should include, but is not limited to, supporting staff to develop their understanding of how to effectively observe and assess children's learning in order to plan quality learning experiences and meaningful next steps.

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

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me.' (HSCS 1.27).

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. However improvements are required to ensure children consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible

The setting was clean and tidy, with plenty of ventilation and natural light. Children had ample space to play inside and out. Resources throughout the playroom reflected children's interests and were attractively displayed. There were some loose parts, natural resources and real life items available to children within the playroom. We discussed increasing real life resources throughout the setting to further enhance children's learning experiences. The garden was well resourced with equipment which supported physical play, curiosity and enquiry and problem solving.

However, the playroom did not feel very warm and welcoming. Although there were some homely touches, these were limited. The quiet, or cosy, space was over stimulating with wall displays and information shared at low levels. This did not provide children with an area to rest and relax in (see area for improvement 1).

Staff worked well together to ensure that children were accounted for at all times. For example, sharing with colleagues when children went inside, ensuring effective supervision. Staff had recognised where potential risks might exist. They had shared with children that they were currently unable to access the large climbing frame until some adjustments had been made. Staff supported children's understanding of risk without compromising their play opportunities, ensuring that they were able to identify and manage risk for themselves.

Infection prevention and control and food safety practices followed best practice guidance. Children washed their hands when they arrived at the setting, with some parents commenting 'This must cut down on spreading of common bugs!'. Staff were observed to wash their hands throughout the inspection and kept surfaces clean. Children were protected as staff followed effective procedures throughout the day, which reduced the potential risk of infection spreading.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all children experience an environment which is welcoming and homely, the management and staff should review and make changes to the environment. This should include, but is not limited to, providing cosy areas for children to rest and relax.

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

'If I experience care and support in a group, I experience a homely environment and can use a comfortable area with soft furnishings to relax.' (HSCS 5.6).

How good is our leadership?

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. However improvements are required to ensure children consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

The peripatetic manager valued parental engagement and feedback. They had shared the setting's aims, vision and values with families, which supported a joint understanding of what to expect from the setting. Parents had created a fundraising committee, working with the manager and staff to raise funds for resources. We signposted the manager to the Care Inspectorate practice note, "Me, my family and my childcare setting" which could inform other ways in which to meaningfully engage families.

Quality assurance processes were effective in highlighting some areas for improvement. All staff were aware of current improvement priorities and were reflecting together to evaluate the progress and impact of these. However, there were some gaps in the areas covered by quality assurance, such as children's experiences, which led to inconsistencies in practice not being identified and further areas for improvement highlighted. We discussed this with the manager who recognised that, although they were keeping records of weekly visits, and auditing records, they were not always evaluating what they recorded against best practice guidance.

Staff were developing effective self-evaluation processes. They were recording where they had made changes, such as, to the environment and linking this to best practice guidance. We suggested that they reflect together, and use best practice guidance to underpin changes, using these reflections to bring about positive change for children and their families.

Staff told us they felt well supported by the manager. Regular support and supervision provided time to review performance and wellbeing. Team meetings allowed staff to reflect and discuss any concerns or achievements. This contributed to staff feeling supported and engaged, which had a positive impact on 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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff were warm, friendly and happy to engage in the inspection process. They had developed close relationships with children and families who had been attending for some time. They made a point of sharing relevant information, which contributed to children's needs being met. Parental feedback highlighted this as a strength, with parents commenting "They always make time to answer any questions and are very accommodating" and "They know me and really know (my child) well."

The service was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of all children. Where children needed additional support, staffing had been enhanced to provide this. This meant that staff were able to respond to children's care and support needs at the right time. Effective use was made of staff's differing skills and knowledge to provide children with consistency of care.

Staff communicated very clearly with each other when moving about the setting, or attending to a task. This fostered a positive ethos and a feeling of respect. They recognised where gaps might exist and were flexible, to ensure effective supervision of children throughout the day.

Children benefited from continuity of care. Staff received breaks to keep them refreshed, and support their personal wellbeing. The timing of breaks was well considered, minimising the impact on children's experiences.

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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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