

Slamannan Early Learning and Childcare Class Day Care of Children

Bank Street
Slamannan
Falkirk
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Telephone: 01324 851 239

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 May 2024

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003015577

About the service

Slamannan Early Learning and Childcare Class is situated in a small residential area of Falkirk. The service operates within the grounds of Slamannan Primary School. Children have access to an entrance area, designated playrooms, a fully enclosed outside area, children's toilets and nappy changing facilities. A small kitchen area is used for the storage and preparation of snacks.

The service is provided by Falkirk Council and is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 64 children not yet attending primary school at any one time:

- of those 64 no more than three are aged under two years
- no more than five are aged two years to under three years and
- no more than 56 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 May 2024, between 12:15 and 17:45 and 17 May 2024 between 8:00 and 16:45. Feedback was given at the end of the second inspection visit. 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 a number of children using the service
- gathered feedback from six families
- spoke with management and staff
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing care and respectful interactions.
- Children were empowered to lead their play and learning.
- Children's individual interests and development were supported well.
- Play spaces were well structured, enabling choice and free movement.
- Staff and management worked well together to meet children's needs.
- Staff promoted children's rights through high quality play and learning experiences.
- The service promoted a culture of continual improvement.

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

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 were individually welcomed into the service and experienced nurturing and compassionate care throughout their day. Warm and respectful interactions supported them to feel safe and well cared for. Positive relationships and attachments with staff contributed to children feeling happy and secure in their daily play and learning and experiences.

Staff listened to children and sensitively responded to their individual cues when seeking comfort and reassurance. Children were supported well to explore and express their emotions. Tools such as books, emotion stones, pictures and photographs encouraged children's learning of different emotions. Gentle discussions with staff promoted their understanding of their own feelings and those of others. This supported children to feel emotionally secure and resulted in a positive and friendly environment.

Staff spoke passionately about children's individual needs and how they were supporting them. Individual care plans were used well to ensure information gathered about children's needs remained current and established the right level of care and support needed. Positive working with families and other professionals contributed to the development of effective strategies when additional support was needed. This promoted continuity of care for children and helped them to remain settled and engaged in their daily experiences. Interactions between staff and children demonstrated they were valued, and staff knew them well. Daily chats with families encouraged positive sharing of information about their child's immediate needs. This and contributing to their child's care plans supported families to remain involved in their child's care and experiences within the setting.

Personal care was sensitively supported and promoted children's independence, privacy and dignity. Staff were respectful of children's individual needs and wishes throughout these experiences.

Mealtimes were a positive and sociable experience. Children were given time to relax and enjoy their meals. Snacks and lunches were nutritionally balanced, encouraging children to make healthy eating choices. Staff sat with children, chatting to them and promoting positive mealtime behaviours. Children's independence and life skills were encouraged as they collected their own glasses, plates and cutlery, self served foods and drinks and washed their own dishes.

Children's risk of harm was reduced as staff were confident about safeguarding procedures and wider issues which may affect families and quickly communicated concerns to the relevant agencies. This contributed to children's continued wellbeing and safety.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were busy and deeply engaged in their play. Throughout the day they had fun as they freely explored a wide range of experiences which provided challenge, creativity and discovery using their senses. Children were curious and asked questions, staff responded through shared interactions contributing to children's learning and understanding. This provoked children's continued interest and learning.

Children were recognised as leaders of their own play and learning. Consultative planning gave them a voice and meant they were fully involved in the provision of daily activities. This contributed to an interesting learning environment which respected children's right to play and learn. Children's learning and development was captured throughout planning, floor books, wall displays and personal learning 'Story books'. Children enjoyed sitting in comfortable areas and looking at their own story books and photographs. This encouraged them to revisit their learning and enabled them to share their experiences with their families. Regular assessment and evaluations of children's individual learning supported planning approaches to promote continued success and individual achievement.

Children were supported well to communicate their wishes in a way that supported their individual needs and preferences. Staff skilfully listened to them and responded quickly to their individual requests. This promoted an inclusive environment and demonstrated to children that they mattered, and their contributions were valued.

Staffs' understanding of child development, differing learning approaches and children's right to play supported the provision of high quality experiences. Effective questioning encouraged children to widen their thinking and further extend their learning.

Children were learning as they enjoyed activities which promoted the development of language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, looking at books, listening to stories and singing. 'Maths bags' which were taken home supported effective home links and enabled families to contribute to their children's learning.

Risky play opportunities such as creating large structures to walk and balance on promoted challenge and encouraged children to explore boundaries and individual abilities. Children developed negotiation skills as they worked together to plan, build, problem solve and test the structures created. They were proud of their achievements as they successfully completed their plan.

Children were supported well to maintain positive connections with their local community. For example, regular use of the school library and gym hall, arranged activities within the nearby community centre, trips to the shops and visits to a nearby park. These increased variety to children's learning experiences.

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.

Children experienced a safe, secure, well maintained, calm and inviting environment. Furnishings were comfortable and appropriate to the children in attendance. The indoor and outdoor environments were creatively structured to take account of children's current interests and stages of development. They were well resourced with materials that supported children's curiosities, play and learning. As a result, most children engaged in play for sustained periods of time.

Wall displays, family photographs and attractive displays of children's art work and learning promoted children's pride and sense of belonging. This demonstrated they mattered, and their contributions were valued.

The layout of resources and play areas enabled children to move freely around and independently select where they wanted to play. Access to a variety of cosy and quiet spaces supported children's emotional wellbeing as they rested, relaxed and spent time alone with staff. This empowered them to make independent choices and set their own pace of play.

Staff had embraced the Care Inspectorate's Keeping children safe - SIMOA campaign (safe, inspect, monitor, observe, act). They had effectively used this to support children's learning of keeping themselves and others safe. A child confidently pointed to a soft toy elephant and told us "SIMOA the elephant helps me to think be safe". Children's safety was further promoted with clear risk assessments and maintenance procedures. Staff's knowledge and practice demonstrated a sound understanding of their responsibilities of keeping children safe.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted through effective infection prevention and control measures. This included positive practice to ensure safe handling, serving and storage of food and drinks. Children were encouraged to follow good hand and respiratory guidance and where appropriate take care of their own personal hygiene. A mop and bucket had been stored in a bathroom area. We asked the service to review this due to the risk of spreading infection.

Children and family's personal information was securely stored to ensure their privacy and dignity. Information was accessible to relevant staff whilst remaining confidential. Children remained safe with access to the premises being monitored through a secure entry system and appropriate staff supervision in the outside area.

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.

Staff and management had developed a shared vision of what was important in the service. This meant children and families were at the heart of the setting and supported a respectful, welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

Positive action had been taken to enhance family engagement. Information about children's learning and individual experiences was effectively shared with families along with future plans and events within the setting. Families' inclusion within the service promoted partnership working and positive learning experiences for children. For example, family breakfasts, family and children book bug sessions, children and family cooking activities and regular stay and play opportunities.

Effective communication and an ethos of mutual trust and respect throughout the service contributed to positive relationships between staff and management. The management team supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their practice and ability. Staff skills were valued and encouraged through specific leadership roles. This included leading initiatives such as children and family cooking sessions, book bugs, developing the garden area and promoting early language. This motivated the team to take pride in their work and supporting children and families.

Quality assurance systems were working well and contributed to a professional team and positive experiences for children and families. This included regular monitoring of staff skills, practice, children's experiences and learning and various other important aspects of the service. Children and families' views were regularly sought and contributed to the development of action plans and future improvements. Families told us there were lots of opportunities for them to be involved in activities and regularly share their thoughts and views of the service provided.

Management and staff were reflective of the service provided and worked well together to develop a realistic improvement plan which was relevant to the service provided and the families who use the service. Management should now enhance evaluation records to support the ongoing assessment of targets and planned improvements.

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.

Children benefitted from a caring staff team who were passionate about their role in supporting children and families. Staffs' varied skills and experience enabled them to support each other well, share their learning and promote professional development. This resulted in the provision of varied activities and continuous learning experiences for children. The ethos of respect within the service meant staff received mentoring and support at a pace that was right for them. This promoted staff inclusion and a solid understanding of what was expected of them in their role within the setting.

The level of staffing and effective deployment across the play areas ensured appropriate supervision and meant staff were visually available for children. This enabled staff to continue meeting children's immediate needs and engage in meaningful and supportive interactions with children. Children were kept safe as staff placed themselves at entrance and exit areas during busy periods such as arrival and leaving times. Staff communicated well throughout the day, sharing tasks and responsibilities. As a result, children's play was uninterrupted, promoting continued engagement in play.

Effective communication between the staff team meant they could provide relevant information to families about their child's day and individual experiences. The staff team worked well to support transitions and get to know children who use both playrooms. This meant children were familiar with all staff and remained settled when moving rooms and when staff were redeployed to cover absences.

Staff demonstrated a flexible approach and commitment to ensuring positive experiences for children. For example, changing routines and working patterns to ensure continued care and support for children during outings and trips around the local community.

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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