

Ardrishaig Early Learning and Childcare Day Care of Children

Ardrishaig Primary School
Glengilp Road
Ardrishaig
Lochgilphead
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Telephone: 01546 603 695

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 June 2024

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2015338311

About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 6 October 2015. The service provider is Argyll and Bute Council.

Ardrishaig Early Learning and Childcare is a daycare of children service. The service operates from their own purpose built nursery and enclosed outdoor space. The service is attached to the local primary school in Ardrishaig, near the town of Lochgilphead. The service operates during school term times.

1. To provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children, three to those not yet attending primary school age of whom four children can be between two to three years old.
2. Staffing ratios as stated in the NCS - Early Education up to the age of 16 (Appendix A) must be maintained at all times. A minimum of two adults must be present at all times.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, carried out by two early learning and childcare inspectors, which took place on 10 and 11 June 2024. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the 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:

- Observed practice and daily life.
- Spoke with children using the service.
- Reviewed documents.
- Spoke with management and staff.
- Sent online questionnaires to parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

- Children were experiencing warm, caring and nurturing support.
- Staff knew children well and had developed positive relationships with them.
- Children relished being outside and had free flow access to outdoors.
- Personal plans should be further developed and streamlined with a focus on detailed support strategies and next steps.
- Planning approaches should be more child led and holistic to support children to lead on their play and learning.
- Management and staff should review children's play spaces both indoors and outside with a view to improving children's play opportunities and experiences through promoting their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure.
- The setting was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of children and provide good continuity of care.
- There was a good mix of skills, knowledge and understanding within the staff team. They communicated well with each other throughout the inspection.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were experiencing warm, caring and nurturing support. Staff knew children well. We could see children had developed relationships with staff through approaching them for cuddles and reassurance and involving them in their play. Most children were happy and settled accessing the play experiences on offer. For example, arts and craft, water play outdoors, books and storytelling and imaginary play in the home corner. Children engaged and played alongside their peers which was supporting them to develop friendships and take turns.

A parent told us;

"My [child] loves being creative, role play and looking at books and feel all these are offered readily to him/her which he/she loves".

Personal plans and all about me profiles contained core information about children's individual needs and preferences gathered through working alongside parents and other professionals. However, this information needed to be streamlined and have clearer strategies and support information for children who required additional support. This should include next steps and experiences that are linked to children's interests, as well as risk assessments to safeguard staff and children. These documents should be dated and signed as appropriate and reviewed at least every six months or when a change occurs. We also found that children's next steps were not always detailed enough and needed to be more child focussed and meaningful. Through observations and information gathered more detailed plans now need to be developed to support children's health, wellbeing and safety needs as well as their play and learning. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

Children enjoyed a hot nutritious meal that was nicely presented and took account of their individual dietary needs. Over the two days we inspected, we were able to see that mealtimes were a relaxed experience and an opportunity for children to develop self-help skills and independence. For example, children were confidently pouring their own drinks and self-serving their lunch and snack, as well as helping staff set up and clear away, collecting their own plates and cutlery. Children with packed lunches were fully included in the lunch time experience with their food being served on plates and cutlery if they needed it. Children could choose to sit with their friends and develop social skills and conversations. Staff were supportive, and considerate of children's needs and sat alongside the children, eating and enjoying their food with them, promoting healthy eating habits and developing conversations.

We sampled medication held and found this was not in line with current best practice guidance. Storage and recording templates need to be reviewed and updated in line with best practice guidance 'Management of Medication in Day care and Childminding Services' and the newly implemented policy by the local authority. Management should also ensure that a termly audit of medication is carried out. **(See Area for Improvement 2)**

Accident and incidents were being recorded and shared with parents, we would ask the service to provide more detail in their monthly audits to identify any areas of risk and any changes required to support a safe environment for children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were confidently access all areas within the nursery. They had free flow access to outdoors and were independently, along with staff when needed, putting on and taking off their outdoor clothing. Staff had developed some areas of interest to engage children's imagination and develop their language, literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. Children could choose to engage in planned activities on offer such as block play, creating cakes using sand and shaving foam or weighing and measuring using potatoes and pasta. Through questioning, role play and story telling staff were also supporting children to develop their imagination.

Although we observed nurturing approaches by staff supporting children's wellbeing and right to play. We found play and learning needed to be developed further both inside and outside to include more opportunities to actively involve children in their play. Management and staff should look at creating a richer learning environment that inspires children's imagination and deepens their learning, with a focus on loose parts play, natural and open-ended resources. This would support and develop children's natural curiosity, sense of wonder and fun through promoting independence and offering choice and challenge. **(See Area of Improvement under Quality Indicator 2.2 of this report)**

Individual Learning Journals were being used to capture children's experiences and some of their achievements, thoughts and ideas. However, when sampling the planning processes that were in place, along with children's individual learning journals, we found it was difficult to identify a clear progression pathway and the next steps in children's play and learning. We discussed with management and staff how there needed to be a more holistic approach to tracking children's progress, with planning more individualised and responsive, based on children's interests and reflecting their choices. To support and enable children to have fun and learn through more purposeful, high quality play experiences, strands of learning should be developed from and linked to their ideas and interests. Staff should continue to build as team on their experience and expertise to fully meet children's needs through high quality interactions and observations, this includes extending children's thinking and widening their skills to support them in developing their interests and leading on their play and learning. **(See Area for Improvement 3)**

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health, wellbeing and safety needs management and staff should ensure, information gathered within children's personal plans is used appropriately to support children's individual needs. This includes next steps, risk assessments and support strategies for children who require them.

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 care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

2. To keep children safe and healthy, management should review the storage and recording of medication procedures and ensure medication is audited, in line with current guidance.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

3. To support children's play and learning and enable them to achieve their potential management and staff should:

- Review and further develop their approaches to child-led planning, by ensuring appropriate levels of challenge and depth in play and learning that supports children's curiosity and creativity and enables them to lead on their play and learning.

- Consideration should be given to how individualisation is captured within planning. In addition, planning should be closely linked to observations in children's profiles where meaningful next steps should be recorded. These should be monitored to ensure consistent quality of written observations.

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 to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery was warm, welcoming and well ventilated. There was a secure door entry and visitors were required to sign in on arrival.

Furniture was child sized and there were some areas with soft furnishings for relaxation and comfort. Main exits were secured and there was an expectation that visitors signed in and out of the service.

Children relished being outdoors and were observed playing on the bike, climbing in the open shared area, digging in the sand and playing in the water tray. However, outdoors requires to be developed further to provide children with better opportunities to develop and promote their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure with open ended natural materials and loose parts play resources. For example, the mud kitchen had limited resources and although children were enjoying digging in the sand, this was only available in a small tray with limited resources for children to explore and experiment with. Management and staff should also look at reviewing the nursery playroom with a focus on developing an environment that gives children more space and opportunities to choose resources. This is with particular reference to the tables and storage units. Staff and management should look at creating areas that inspire children to play and learn while allowing them to be creative. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

Staff and children should also be mindful with regards to keeping play spaces tidier, accessible and respectful. Staff should be modelling good practice of caring and respecting resources and encouraging children to leave areas ready for others to use.

Risk assessments were in place to support a safe environment for children when inside and outside the service. These should continue to be updated and reviewed regularly or when any changes occurred supporting staff to keep children safe.

Staff and children were practicing appropriate Infection prevention and control practice, we discussed purchasing liquid hand soap that would be available at the children's sinks to ensure they were always washing hands appropriately.

Areas for improvement

1. To support positive outcomes and improve children's play experiences management and staff should:

- Provide children with more opportunities outdoors, through free play, physical challenge, open ended materials and loose parts play, to discover, promote their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure.
- Review the layout of children's play spaces indoors with a view to creating more space with better areas and opportunities for children to play and learn, choose resources, and be inspired and creative.

This is to ensure care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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 to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

We found the management team engaged well during the inspection process, taking on advice and support, demonstrating a commitment for improvement. We acknowledge there have been several changes in the management team since the last inspection, and management were open and honest in relation to the challenges the service had faced. We recognise the team is continuing to develop the service for children and their families and the service's vision and values supported this, as they were closely linked and connected to the local community.

The management team recognised that they were on a journey of improvement which would involve staff, families and children. Specific areas of performance such as developing their play spaces and experiences for children both indoors and outside, would need to improve in order to deliver the best possible experiences and outcomes for children and their families.

Management and staff were meeting on a regular basis to review and reflect on practice, support for children and staffing. This was giving them some opportunities to discuss areas of improvement, as well as take action on immediate improvements. For example, planning the outdoor play spaces and risk assessments for children.

Parents were welcomed into the service at collection and drop off times, staff took time to feedback to parents when children were returning home. The service were encouraging parents to have an active role in the service through their online profile app and some play and stay sessions. We would encourage the service to continue to develop links with home through gathering children and parents views in developing the service further.

One parent told us;

"Stay and play days are a lovely opportunity to spend time with [my child] in the setting or grandparents have opportunity to go along too which is lovely".

We acknowledged that the service had plans in place to support some priorities for improvement. For example, the development of outdoor learning and nurturing links with families and the local community. Some quality monitoring was being carried out. For example, observations of staff practice had been undertaken in December 2023 and May 2024 along with some auditing of learning logs. However, these processes were not yet regular or robust enough to ensure procedures were being consistently followed or to secure sustained improvement. Quality assurance, including monitoring and self-evaluation now needs to be more firmly embedded into the process of evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole. We would encourage the service to use the feedback following inspection, in conjunction with the Care Inspectorate: A quality framework for day care of children, childminding, and school aged childcare, as a tool for further development of self-evaluation and improvement, with high quality play placed at the heart of their improvement planning. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

Areas for improvement

1. To support and sustain continuous improvement throughout the service, management and staff should embed robust systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of their service delivery and place high quality play at the heart of their improvement planning.

This is to ensure management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11) and 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

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.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were warm, welcoming and engaged well in the inspection process. Staff were open and honest during discussions, and we could see they were a flexible and committed team wanting to deliver best outcomes for children and families.

The setting was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of children and provide good continuity of care. We found staff communicated well with each other throughout the inspection and there was a good mix of skills, knowledge and understanding within the staff team.

They worked well together, communicating clearly when their attention was needed with children, when moving about the setting and prior to any transitions. This contributed to effective supervision throughout the day, resulting in children being confident and comfortable about routines and transitions. This created an environment that supported communication with families and allowed the children to feel safe and secure, with adults who cared for them.

Parents told us:

"Staff are very approachable and happy to meet to discuss any concerns."

"The staff are just incredible. My child has progressed so much in their care."

"Nothing makes a parent happier when your child comes out of their ELC setting chatting away about all the lovely things they have done with their friends and staff."

The service had a dedicated staff team who were all registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). They were proactive in their professional development. Annual appraisals provided an opportunity to reflect on their role and discuss plans for future learning. The national induction resources was supporting new staff, along with a more experienced member of staff as a mentor, to offer advice, support and guidance. However, we would suggest regular one to one support and supervision between the head teacher and staff would further support morale and benefit the nursery staff team as a whole.

In developing the service further and to support staff in taking on leadership roles and responsibilities, we would encourage management and staff to consider champion roles. For example, in family learning, loose part play, maths and numeracy. This style of leadership would value staff's individual strengths and contribute to improved experiences for children. We would encourage this to be progressed through staff having the option to develop areas within the setting on a rotational basis. This in turn would support staff's knowledge, understanding, and morale within their role, while supporting children's individual needs and develop areas of play and learning while engaging with children in different parts of the nursery.

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	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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