

Lainshaw Early Childhood Centre Day Care of Children

Kilwinning Road
Stewarton
Kilmarnock
KA3 3DL

Telephone: 01560 483 653

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 June 2024

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2003016954

About the service

Lainshaw Early Childhood Centre is a daycare for children service provided by East Ayrshire Council in Stewarton. The service has sole use of the premises and outdoor play area. It is currently registered to provide a maximum of 80 children aged 2 years to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 15 children will be aged 2 years up to 3 years old. On the day of inspection, 67 children were present, all between the ages of 2 and to not yet attending primary school.

Children can access 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 Tuesday, 25 June 2024, between 08:30 and 17:00 and Wednesday 26 June 2024, between 09:00 and 12:30.

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 six children using the service;
- reviewed documents;
- spoke with the manager and staff; and
- nine completed questionnaires were received from parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

- Staff were responsive to children's individual needs.
- Children joined in well with activities which were on offer.
- Daily access to fresh air and outdoor experiences supported children's health and wellbeing.
- Management and staff worked well as a team to support children's needs.
- Parents' views were sought to help improve the service.

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 good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced warm and nurturing interactions from staff who knew their needs and preferences. Important information had been gathered about children prior to their attending the service, and children were allocated a key worker who took time to get to know their likes, dislikes, and daily care needs. A parent told us "Friendly, welcoming staff on entering and leaving the nursery. Keyworker is approachable and friendly". As a result, children were happy and settled.

Staff were kind and caring in their interactions when supporting children with personal care. We observed that children's permission was sought before personal care was carried out. This meant that children's privacy was respected and their play was not disrupted whilst ensuring their care needs were met.

Children ate their lunch all together in the playroom, which contained appropriately sized tables and chairs. This ensured children's comfort and enabled effective supervision. Children and staff sat together most of the time, which provided an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere and ensured a caring and positive social experience. Children were encouraged to serve their own food and drinks which helped develop their independence.

ASN processes are embedded, with regular Team with Family Meetings taking place, chaired by the SMT, where parents and professionals work together to ensure the needs of individual children are being met.

Staff knew the children well. This was supported by information contained in personal care plans, such as likes, dislikes, and some targets to support children's development. However, the plans did not always clearly indicate how children would be supported. We suggested that plans be further developed to ensure they identified clearer strategies that show how children's needs will be met. This would ensure that staff have all the information they need to support children's individual care needs.

Children were kept safe and well. Medication was stored securely, and children's medication records were accurately completed. Accidents and incidents were recorded and appropriately shared with parents. These processes supported children's overall wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Across the service, children were mostly settled and engaged in play. They told us they enjoyed playing football outside with their friends and could follow their own interests as they explored their environment. The service supported children's movement between indoor and outdoor spaces; there were few disruptions to their play as these transitions were planned for and supported. This ensured children could lead their play and benefited from extended periods outdoors.

Children benefitted from a variety of natural, open-ended resources. We saw children having fun as they used a variety of resources to look for worms while digging in the garden, and building with a range of wooden blocks. This supported children's development of curiosity, imagination, and problem-solving skills during indoor and outdoor play.

Staff provided children with opportunities to develop early language, literacy, and numeracy skills through play. To support literacy, the service used stories indoors and outdoors, mark-making with various materials, and children joined in with action songs. Numbers and measuring equipment positioned throughout the nursery supported numeracy. This provided children with the opportunity to develop their skills through play.

Staff told us that they planned children's play experiences based on their interests and observations of children's individual needs. We observed some occasions where children were disinterested and disengaged from the play experiences on offer. Following discussions with management, staff provided more engaging play opportunities for children on the second day of inspection and children were having more fun. Management and staff should ensure that children consistently experience play and learning opportunities that are fun, exciting, and meet children's interests allowing them to achieve their potential.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children experienced a well-lit setting with suitable ventilation. It was a welcoming environment with real furniture, lamps, comfortable cushions, rugs and bean bags. This gave children the message that they matter. We highlighted to management that some soft furnishings were in need of cleaning and asked them to address this. This would support a more homely environment.

Children had dedicated play spaces and access to outdoor space, with some resources to meet their needs and stages of development. Play spaces reflected some children's interests and preferences, and staff supported children during play. For example, children enjoyed playing with the dolls, dressing the dolls, and pushing them around in buggies. This helped children learn through play and develop their imagination.

Staff had some understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding infection prevention and control. For example, they supported children some of the time in washing their hands at appropriate times. This needs to be more consistent. This minimised the risk of cross infection, keeping children and staff safe and healthy.

Staff took the older children outdoors daily in groups, as they could not freely access the outdoor play area from the playroom because of the layout of the ECC building and outdoor play areas. Younger children had free flow access, which was managed well. The outdoor space offered the children a wide range of resources and opportunities to climb, jump, run, dig. This supported children's health and wellbeing.

Children did not have access to the wider community. Staff told us that they were unable to provide this due to staff absences but planned to reintroduce this in the new term. This would ensure children had the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging in their local community.

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.

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

The management team and staff engaged well during the inspection process and were receptive to our suggestions for improvement. The management team made some changes from our suggestions before the conclusion of the inspection. For example, we highlighted an issue with a lack of resources in the playrooms, and this was addressed before we concluded our inspection. This supported a culture of continual improvement.

Staff had developed positive relationships and effective communication with parents. Parents were welcomed into the service at drop-off and collection times, and staff encouraged an open-door policy in the playrooms. Parents were invited to parents' 'stay and play', and the management team sent out regular communication through newsletters and the service's online learning journals. Parents told us they were "Asked for opinions at several times" and "surveys are often sent out, and there are plenty of opportunities for parents to come into the nursery and take part in various afternoon events". As a result, parents felt valued and included in the service.

The service had developed an improvement plan and monitoring calendar which identified key priorities to support the ongoing development of the service. Due to staff absences, monitoring of staff practice, and completion of documents such as children's personal plans had not been kept up to date. This meant that there were some inconsistencies in staff practice, such as staff level of confidence in providing play experiences. The team were now fully staffed which will support their ongoing quality assurance processes. We discussed the importance of continuing to re-establish these processes to develop staff skills and confidence and to ensure better outcomes for children and families.

Staff and management had recently implemented East Ayrshire's planning processes and developmental trackers to enable them to track children's progress over time and to inform how they would plan to support children's play and learning. However, this was at the early stages of being implemented. We encouraged the management team to continue to embed and evaluate recent changes as this would support staff reflection on practice and promote positive outcomes for children.

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 caring, and the nursery had a positive ethos. The nursery was appropriately staffed, and staff were suitably deployed throughout the day to meet children's needs. Throughout the service, there was a focus on the children as individuals, ensuring that children felt respected and valued.

Staff worked well together as a team, and their different skills and knowledge complimented each other. A parent told us: "The staff are very friendly and I know that my child is happy attending and well cared for". Staff moved in response to children's requests, for example, when children wanted to access outdoor play and when they required one-on-one support. This resulted in positive interactions with the children.

Overall staff positioned themselves appropriately to ensure maximum supervision both indoors and outdoors. Staff communicated well with each other, transitions were planned, and children were familiar with the daily routine. Staff shared with us, "The strength of the team, the way in which we support each other". This supported better outcomes for children.

The management team effectively supported staff by spending regular time on the nursery floor. This helped to build positive working relationships and allowed time for role-modelling and professional discussion. Staff were happy, engaged, and shared tasks through working as a team. Staff breaks sometimes reduced supervision for children, for example, during handwashing. We suggested that the timing of breaks be reviewed to support children's needs.

Staff absences impacted on the service's ability to lead improvements. For example, leadership roles and links within the community had been paused and the senior practitioner was required to provide cover within the playroom. We asked management to review contingency plans for absences so that improvements to the service could continue to be developed. This would support more positive outcomes for children.

At the end of the day, staff had time to reflect, discuss children individually, and plan for the following day as a team. Staff meetings were held regularly to discuss planning, children's needs, areas working well within the nursery, and areas needing improvement. This resulted in a staff team that worked well together to meet the needs of the children in their care.

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

We have recommended that the service prepares a risk assessment for the synthetic outdoor surfaces freely accessed from the playroom in the two to three years age group as these pose a slip hazard for children and staff in icy and wet weather.

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

This area for improvement was made on 31 January 2018.

Action taken since then

Risk assessments were in place and staff could talk us through what they do to ensure children stay staff in icy and wet weather.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

We have recommended that the provider reviews the drainage in the garden area for the three to five years age group to enable them to have a better quality outdoor play and learning experience.

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 31 January 2018.

Action taken since then

The drainage in the garden area for the three- to five-year-old age group has been repaired, enabling children to have a better-quality outdoor play and learning experience.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support staff and maintain good quality care and support for children, management should further develop and maintain a systematic approach to quality assuring the work of the centre. The process should include monitoring, staff appraisal and improvement planning.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16; Standard 14 - Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 31 January 2018.

Action taken since then

The service has developed a process that supports quality assurance and includes monitoring, staff appraisal, and improvement planning. This supported better outcomes for children and families.

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?	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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