

# CALA Beechwood ELC: Inverness College UHI Day Care of Children

CALA Beechwood ELC  
1 Inverness Campus  
INVERNESS  
IV2 5NA

Telephone: 07831735169

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 August 2024

**Service provided by:**  
CALA Integrated Services

**Service provider number:**  
SP2010011308

**Service no:**  
CS2021000159

## About the service

CALA Beechwood Early Learning and Childcare: Inverness College UHI, is a daycare of children service, operating from the grounds of the campus of the University of the Highlands and Islands. They are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 55 children at any one time. Of those 55 no more than nine are aged under two years; no more than 15 are aged two years to under three years; no more than 16 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. In addition, they may provide a holiday club for up to no more than 15 children who are attending primary school. The service is provided by CALA Integrated Services.

Children have access to large playrooms, all of which have direct access to toilet facilities, and to enclosed garden areas. The premises also consist of staff areas, a kitchen, meeting rooms and cloakrooms.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 and 27 August 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 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 children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from 12 families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children benefited from warm and caring nurturing approaches, which supported their overall wellbeing.
- Play experiences supported children's developing literacy and language skills.
- Infection prevention control practices followed best practice guidance, protecting children from the possible spread of infection.
- Quality assurance processes were supporting ongoing improvement; this was having a positive impact on children's experiences.
- Staff supported children's overall wellbeing through compassionate and responsive care, which contributed to them feeling loved and valued.

## 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 clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children benefited from warm and caring nurturing approaches, which supported their overall wellbeing. Staff supported children to settle, offering reassurance and cuddles where wanted. They responded to both verbal and nonverbal cues, giving children the support they needed. As a result children felt secure and valued.

Staff managed minor disputes between children very well. They skilfully empowered children to think about their choices and how this impacted on their peers. This demonstrated a very calm and supportive approach which helped children regulate their emotions and enabled them to resolve minor conflicts. As a result, children were gaining confidence and skills in regulating their individual emotional security and wellbeing.

Staff knew children well, demonstrating a good understanding of individual preferences and needs. One parent commented "Very friendly staff who care for each baby as an individual." Personal plans were developed with parents and reviewed to support children's changing needs. Other agencies had been involved when developing strategies to support children's individual needs and these were used consistently by staff. This helped promote a caring and nurturing ethos.

Children benefited from their families being warmly welcomed into the service. They were enabled to support their children to settle in and participate in stay and play sessions. Establishing good working relationship with parents was important to the staff. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time as well as online updates. Most parents felt communication was effective. Parent told us "The staff give daily updates on what they have been doing and how my child has been. They keep me informed with the personal plan reviews as required." and "The staff are very detailed with the daily diary that they fill in so I know exactly what's happened that day. They are also very good at keeping all parents up to date with information via the app and face to face on collection/drop off." Meaningful relationships had been formed with most families who told us they felt included in the nursery community. This holistic approach resulted in children that were happy and learning, and most families felt valued and included.

Children were supported with personal care routines with dignity and respect. Staff supported children who were toilet training in a discreet manner; as a result children were progressing well and with confidence. One parent told us "my child could start potty training when I felt she was ready and staff are helping us out".

Mealtimes were now well considered, ensuring children benefited from calm and relaxed snack and lunchtimes. Children had a number of opportunities to develop their independence skills, from self-serving meals, selecting cutlery and younger children practicing drinking from cups. Staff ate with the children, encouraging them to try new food by modelling healthy eating habits. They recognised the value of these routines in developing strong relationships with children, whilst being on hand should an emergency, such as choking, occur. As a result, children enjoyed positive social experiences.

Arrangements in place ensured that children were able to sleep and rest when they needed to. Staff were aware of the importance of quality sleep for children's emotional resilience and safety. There were sufficient cots and beds to allow children to follow personal routines and family preferences. Staff made sure that children had access to comforters and fresh bedding, enhancing the quality of sleep for each child.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were engaged in their play and having fun through a balance of spontaneous and play experiences. Older children were able to choose where they wanted to play, having free flow access to the garden areas. Staff recognised the importance of children learning through their play and facilitated children's chosen activities for them. For example, supporting children to move resources in the garden to the area they wanted to play in. This approach enriched children's learning and supported their developing imagination and creativity.

Play experiences supported children's developing literacy and language skills. Staff shared books with children individually, or in small groups as children could choose to join in. They engaged children with fun interactions, naming items in pictures, repeating words and asking appropriate questions. Song and rhyme was introduced throughout the day, with children clearly enjoying singing along as they developed their language and communication skills.

Some staff introduced mathematical language to play and through song, but, on occasion, there were missed opportunities to support children's developing numeracy skills. For example, explaining concepts of size when building with blocks, or supporting counting in daily routines.

Staff recognised when to engage with children in their play, and when to allow play to continue without interruption, contributing to children learning at their own pace. One parent commented "Staff go out of their way to engage all children while giving them agency on how and what they want to play." Play and learning experiences supported children's natural curiosity and developing problem solving skills, as they explored real life items and loose parts available to them, both inside and outside.

Planning approaches were responsive to children's interests and needs, with one parent telling us "We do sheets every so often to update nursery on child's interest and then you see on the class dojo app what has been implemented. For example I said about my child loving tractors and playing with water - couple days later nursery had a tractor car wash set up." Staff were gaining confidence in balancing responsive and intentional planning to support children to progress well. Children's progress and development was recorded through learning journals and developmental overviews. Staff made links to the health and wellbeing indicators for younger children, identifying how they could support them to progress further. For older children, some observations identified children's developing knowledge, skills and understanding. However, some were descriptive and next steps were not consistently identified and followed up. The staff and manager were aware of this and recognised this is an area for continued development.

## How good is our setting?

4 - Good

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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

The setting was warm and welcoming, and furnished to a good standard. Children had ample space to play and rest in, which told them that they mattered. The manager and staff had worked hard to review, and make changes to the layout of the playrooms following the last inspection. The addition of touches such as decoration and real life items enhanced the homely feel of playrooms. They should continue to develop each playroom, and the garden areas, to provide children with a variety of rich and stimulating play and learning experiences.

Infection prevention control practices followed best practice guidance, protecting children from the possible spread of infection. For example, children were supported to wash their hands when they came inside and before eating. Staff were vigilant around food hygiene procedures, providing high levels of safety for children.

Staff worked well together to ensure children were accounted for at all times, undertaking regular counts as children arrived and left the setting, or when they moved between indoors and outdoors. They were aware of where they needed to position themselves to ensure they had good vision of children playing. Staff ensured that younger children were safe during a walk to feed the ducks on the University Campus, following processes to allow each child to take part while ensuring they were kept safe. This contributed to children having fun, without their experiences being compromised.

The setting was clean and generally well maintained. Staff were clear about the procedures for cleaning within the service. Nappy changing facilities had been reviewed and followed best practice guidance, so that they supported the safety and wellbeing needs of children and staff.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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

The manager and staff fully engaged in the inspection process. They demonstrated commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements. This was highlighted by the improvements which had been put in place since the previous inspection. The provider had reviewed arrangements for administration of the holiday club, which meant that the manager had sufficient time to carry out her role. As a result, children and families were benefiting from improved outcomes.

The manager, and staff, valued the views and contributions of families. There were regular opportunities for families to give feedback, both formally and informally. Feedback contributed to the ongoing development of the service, meaning families were meaningfully involved. One parent commented that the setting was "very welcoming to parents and our views matter." Parents were warmly welcomed into the setting for regular events, as well as daily when dropping off and collecting.

Staff had the opportunity to reflect together, using these reflections to influence positive change for children. They were confident in reviewing any changes made, such as the layout of the environment, considering the impact on children's experiences. They ensured that improvements were underpinned by best practice and reviewed changes regularly to evaluate the impact for children. As a result, children and families benefited from care and support based on relevant evidence and best practice.

Quality assurance processes had been developed, for example, monitoring children's experiences, supporting ongoing improvement. We found that the auditing of medication records was not effective. The manager took steps to address any concerns immediately, to ensure positive outcomes for children. The manager should now ensure that robust quality assurance processes and procedures continue to inform improvement planning.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

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

Staff supported children's overall wellbeing through compassionate and responsive care. We found that staff had developed strong relationships with children and their families. Parents felt confident leaving their children in their care, with comments including:

"Staff are absolutely lovely and greet every child and engage with them, making them feel at ease from minute one."

"They are all so friendly and ask about us as a family, I feel they all make an effort to get to know you."

"All the staff are very reassuring and have a lovely personal touch. They knew I was nervous about leaving my child and they have really helped relax the both of us."

Staffing arrangements met the needs of children, who received consistency of care across the day. This also supported effective sharing of information between staff and families. At times, some children's choice was restricted, such as choosing to play outside, due to staff numbers. We discussed this with the manager who told us that they were recruiting to fill a vacancy, but this was proving difficult. We acknowledged that recruitment was challenging across the sector. Overall, staffing ensured that children had received quality experiences.

Staff received appropriate breaks, supporting their overall wellbeing and supporting them to feel refreshed. Breaks were well planned so that children were effectively supervised during busier times of the day, such as lunchtime. This contributed to children's needs being met at the right time.

## 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 effectively meet children's individual needs and support their wellbeing, development and progress, children's personal plans should be further developed. This should include but is not limited to:

a) ensuring all staff are knowledgeable about each child's health and wellbeing needs and that tailored care and support strategies are provided and used effectively to meet those needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with: Personal planning guidance on Care Inspectorate Hub.

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

**This area for improvement was made on 29 September 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of the support individual children needed. They used personal planning information effectively, to ensure that children received the support that was right for them. This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's wellbeing the manager and staff should review and improve the mealtime experiences. This should include, but is not limited to:

a) reviewing staff deployment and practice to support children during snack and mealtimes; and  
b) staff providing effective supervision where appropriate to children during mealtimes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with: Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children on Care Inspectorate Hub. Practice note Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC) on Care Inspectorate Hub.

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 snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.' (HSCS 1.35).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 September 2023.**



**Action taken since then**

Changes had been made to staffing and procedures around mealtimes. This meant that staff were able to focus on children, who benefited from a positive social experience. This area for improvement has been met.

**Previous area for improvement 3**

To enable all children to be cared for in an appropriate environment that meets their needs and supports them to reach their full potential, the manager and staff should review and develop the environment. This should include, but is not limited to, providing children with an environment that is welcoming, comfortable and homely and appropriately resourced so that they are provided with sufficient opportunities to engage meaningfully with their play and learning environments.

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

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.' (HSCS 1:31).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 September 2023.**

**Action taken since then**

The manager and staff had reviewed and made positive changes to the environment. Children had access to warm and cosy areas to rest and relax in. Resources now provided children with a breadth of opportunities to play and learn. This area for improvement has been met.

**Previous area for improvement 4**

The provider should ensure that children experience an environment which is safe and clean. To do this, they should, as a minimum:

- a) clean areas which are visibly dirty or remove items that cannot be effectively cleaned; and
- b) ensure effective infection prevention and control practices are implemented.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with: Infection Prevention and Control in childcare settings

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 area for improvement was made on 29 September 2023.**

**Action taken since then**

The environment was visibly clean and tidy. Staff understood the importance of following best practice in infection prevention and control. This meant that the risk of possible infection spreading was reduced. This area for improvement has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 5

To support and meet children's wellbeing needs, staff should at a minimum ensure:

- a) children experience an environment which has sufficient cots to meet their needs; and
- b) children experience an environment which is safe and comfortable to sleep and rest

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

'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS 5.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 September 2023.**

### Action taken since then

Arrangements for sleep were now well considered. Children had access to appropriate sleep spaces, to support quality sleep experiences. This area for improvement has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 6

To ensure improved outcomes for children the provider should implement effective and robust quality assurance processes. To do this the provider should, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) regular, effective, and focused monitoring is carried out across the setting; and
- b) the management team effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole.

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 area for improvement was made on 29 September 2023.**

### Action taken since then

The manager now had sufficient time to undertake her role. Robust quality assurance and self evaluation was leading to improved outcomes for children and their families. Staff were supported to reflect together about their practice, and benefited from one to one support from the manager. As a result, children were receiving care and support based on best practice. This area for improvement has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 7

To ensure children are safe and receive high quality experiences at all times, the provider and manager should, as a minimum review and make appropriate changes to staff deployment to improve experiences for children.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14)

This area for improvement was made on 29 September 2023.

#### Action taken since then

Children's needs were effectively met as changes had been made to staff deployment. Some staff had moved playrooms, which supported children through transition, and ensured a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience across the setting. 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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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## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

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