

# Acrewood Nursery Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
1 October 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Acrewood Nursery

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001121

**Service no:**  
CS2003005384

## About the service

Acrewood Nursery provides an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 142 children aged from birth to 16 years, of whom no more than 97 children may be of pre school age and no more than 28 children are under the age of 2 years.

The service is located close to Stirling town centre. The accommodation is a self-contained building with three separate playrooms, currently being used to accommodate the various age groups of children. In addition, there is a separate kitchen, a staff room and an office. Children have access to a large outdoor space in close proximity to each playroom that is fully enclosed.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 30 September and Tuesday 1 October. 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:

- spent time with the children using the service
- received feedback from 16 of their family members
- spoke with staff members and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

- Children experienced nurturing care and support from staff that knew them very well as individuals.
- Positive and nurturing attachments had been formed between staff and children.
- Personal plans were completed in partnership with parents which ensured that children's supports were tailored to their individual needs.
- Children benefitted from staff that listened to their views and respected their rights.
- Children's learning was well supported through an effective balance of adult led and responsive planning.
- Children benefitted from a staff team that were passionate and committed to taking forward improvements.
- The service should ensure that maintenance issues are addressed in a timely manner.

**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?	4 - 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 experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches from staff that knew them very well. Children and staff enjoyed spending time together, laughing and chatting with each other. One parent told us, "I like the friendly, knowledgeable staff who care about my children and understand what they need in order to achieve. I feel safe leaving my children here". This supported children to feel loved and valued.

Children benefitted from effective personal planning which was developed in partnership with parents. Parents' comments included, "I'm always fully involved in updating my child's care plans" and "The staff are always reviewing care plans and making sure the information is correct and relevant, asking if there is any changes or additional information they require for the care of my children". All parents told us that they felt fully involved in developing their child's personal plan. They were specific to children and identified any supports required. As a result, children received the right support at the right time and were progressing well.

Staff had created inviting, cosy spaces for children to rest and relax. For example, a quiet, sensory area had been developed in the 3-5 room with low lighting and comfortable spaces for children to rest or sleep. A small summer house outside allowed children a space to rest when playing outside. Staff spoke confidently about safe sleeping guidance and this was followed effectively to ensure that children were safe as they slept. This promoted children's emotional wellbeing.

Mealtimes were valuable social experiences for children across all rooms. The meals were healthy, nutritious and followed best practice guidance. Children had lunch together and were involved in setting the table and serving themselves. Some of the jugs were heavy for children to lift. We asked the service to further consider this to ensure that children's independence is well supported. Staff sat with children and had meaningful conversations as they ate. When finished, children were able to freely explore the playroom. Staff used these experiences well to build strong and trusting relationships. This supported children to develop a positive healthy relationship with food and mealtimes.

Children's medical needs were met as mostly appropriate procedures were in place to ensure the safe administration and storage of medication. Staff were confident to discuss children's individual medical needs and this information was recorded appropriately. The medication policy did not reflect best practice. We asked the service to update the medication policy to ensure that it reflected the effective procedures in place. This would further ensure children's medical needs are met.

### Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children had fun and enjoyed meaningful experiences which supported their learning. For example, children had shown an interest in maps and where their own houses were. Their questions, curiosities and thoughts were recorded by staff as they explored this interest together. Children were able to reflect on this experience and spoke about what they had learned. This supported children to thrive in the service.

Interactions with children were responsive and staff used effective questioning to support children in their learning. Staff responded quickly and calmly to children's individual needs and requests. They interacted with children at their level and always used a calm, reassuring voice. This demonstrated to children that they mattered and promoted their sense of security and belonging.

All staff knew children very well as individuals. They spoke confidently about children's interests, likes and dislikes. Parents told us that their children loved coming to the setting. Children told us that they liked the staff and felt listened to. As a result, children felt valued and respected.

Children had lots of opportunities to reflect on their learning with staff and their friends. Children and staff shared their learning on wall displays and in floor books that included photos, children's comments and staff observations. Children were confident to discuss their learning and shared this with us during the inspection. This showed children that their views on play were respected, while sharing their achievements with friends and family.

Children's early language and literacy was supported as staff ensured all children had individual next steps. For example, children enjoyed reading stories and singing songs with staff throughout the service. Staff regularly reviewed children's progress in all areas and met with parents to ensure that this was a shared approach. One parent told us, "We have regular meetings with our child's keyworker to discuss their next steps and what they have been achieving within the nursery setting". Another parent shared, "Acrewood has been fundamental in our child's growing confidence to make friends and be a part of the community".

## How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

### Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

The well planned indoor and outdoor spaces provided welcoming, interesting and exciting areas for children to explore. The indoor playrooms were comfortable and homely spaces with plenty of natural light and access to large, enclosed garden spaces outside. The playrooms were laid out to offer children easy access to resources. Staff carefully considered how to present the resources so they invited children to play. This gave a strong message to children that they mattered.

Children's play was supported through a range of resources that were clean, well-organised and encouraged exploration, enquiry and fun. For example, outside children had fun as they played with water in the mud kitchen or rode bikes through the grass. The service had identified some areas that required further development to ensure the same high quality experiences for children, for example the outdoor space in the 0-2 room. We encouraged the service to continue with their plans. This would ensure children continuously benefit from the high quality resources on offer.

Children's current interests and curiosities were visible in the fun and exciting play spaces. One parent shared, "The layout of the room changes each day with various activity stations, my daughter informs me of numerous activities she has taken part in". A recent interest in campfires was well supported by staff in the setting. Children made a real campfire with staff in the garden and were encouraged to explore this further in the room. Some children made pretend fires inside or painted pictures of their experience in the art area. This supported children to remain engaged in their play.

Homely, nurturing spaces were well used by staff and children for reading stories and for children to rest. We observed strong, nurturing relationships between staff and children during these experiences. This supported children to feel valued.

Effective infection prevention and control practices were mostly well embedded across the service. Children and staff were seen regularly washing their hands, in line with good practice. They were confident and familiar with these routines. We asked the manager to ensure that the nappy changing policy reflected best practice guidance. This would further ensure that children's health is promoted.

Effective risk assessments were in place and regularly reviewed. This highlighted hazards and appropriate actions to minimise potential risks to children and staff. Children benefitted from a staff team which valued meaningful real-life experiences such as making campfires. This approach encouraged children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe while supporting their overall health and wellbeing.

Some risks had not been effectively identified by staff or actioned appropriately. For example, the carpet in the out of school care room on the step was coming up and part of the linoleum had been torn in the 0-2 room. This meant that these areas could not be effectively cleaned and presented a trip hazard. We shared this with the manager and provider of the service. To ensure children's health and safety are promoted, the provider should ensure that all maintenance issues are addressed (**see area for improvement 1**).

## Areas for improvement

1. To promote children's health and wellbeing, the provider and manager should ensure that all maintenance issues are addressed promptly.

This should include but is not limited to:

- ensuring that all of the flooring is in a good state of repair and easily cleaned
- all trip hazards have been identified and addressed effectively.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment'. (HSCS 5.22).

## How good is our leadership?

**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 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The passionate and reflective team were committed to delivering high quality experiences for children and families. There was a shared, well established vision amongst the staff team which put children and families at the heart of the service. The vision had been developed through consultation with children and families. This well considered approach ensured that the values of the service represented all. As a result, practice and improvements in the service continually put children at the heart.

The management team were approachable, reflective and motivating. They engaged well with the inspection process and were keen to consider any feedback given. Staff said they felt well supported by the leadership team and had opportunities to develop their own leadership skills. One staff member spoke about opportunities to lead on specific improvement work, for example improving the outdoor space. This showed that a shared leadership approach was developing across the service.

A range of effective quality assurance systems were in place and improving outcomes for children. This included regular meetings to discuss planning, children's needs and priorities. Parents had a range of opportunities to influence change in the service. They commented regularly on how the service could improve. One parent said, "I'm always offered the opportunity to provide feedback, the management is approachable and I feel actively listened to". Another parent told us, "I feel my feedback is always welcomed and taken on board. I feel welcome to speak to the keyworker and the management at any time". This showed that families were listened to, valued and that their thoughts and views were improving the service.

Planned improvements were led well and impacted positively on the development of the service. For example, the service recently completed major renovations to the building which significantly improved the spaces and experiences for children. This showed a commitment to improvements which were improving outcomes for children.

Effective self-evaluation highlighted areas of strengths in the service and areas to further consider. The management team worked closely with the local authority to evaluate their own service while considering best practice guidance. This supported sustained improvements and ensured children consistently experienced high quality care and support.

## 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, therefore we evaluated this quality theme as very good.

### Quality Indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

The staff team provided a welcoming environment for children and their families. A strong ethos of respect for families had been well established. Staff showed warmth and kindness, and recognised the importance of nurturing, warm and responsive attachment. One parent shared, "I'm so happy my child has been a part of the Acrewood community, it's a really wonderful positive and supportive place".

Children's needs were met consistently because the right number of staff were available at all times. Staff ensured that effective supervision was in place while making sure that high quality interactions were a priority. For example, at mealtimes staff ensured that there was someone sitting with children and talking to them about their day. This supported children to benefit from quality interactions.

Staff had developed positive working relationships with each other, creating an inclusive and supportive team. Regular meetings and support from senior staff allowed for shared reflections on practice and the service. This meant that staff felt valued and empowered to grow professionally and provided children with a happy and supportive environment.

Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and supervised children while also spending quality time with them. They worked flexibly to supervise children in their play and offer a range of experiences safely. As a result, children experienced a very calm, nurturing experience throughout the session.

The motivated staff team worked together to share key tasks and responsibilities. They worked very well as a team by sharing ideas and communicating effectively. Staff shared ideas from their own learning which was based on best practice. This meant children experienced consistently high-quality care, play and learning. Staff told us they were listened to, felt valued and were fully aware of their roles.

## Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.



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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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