

Galston Early Childhood Centre Day Care of Children

Western Road
Galston
KA4 8BG

Telephone: 01563 820 360

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 October 2024

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2003016950

About the service

Galston Early Childhood Centre is provided by East Ayrshire Council and is located in Galston Primary School Campus. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 82 children over two years of age until they start primary school. At the time of the inspection, 95 children were registered with the service.

The early childhood centre is close to local amenities, green spaces, parks, and transport links. Children have access to a playroom, quiet room, enclosed garden, and large outdoor area with an outside toilet.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. It took place on 24 and 25 October 2024. Inspectors attended the service between 09:30 and 18:15 hours on 24 October and from 09:00 to 14:30 hours on 25 October.

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

Key messages

- Children were happy, secure and had formed positive relationships with staff and the manager.
- Daily access to fresh air and outdoor experiences supported children's health and wellbeing.
- Children benefitted from connections to their local community.
- The new manager and staff worked very well together to create a culture of shared responsibility.
- There was a positive staff ethos and staff worked well together.

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 them attending the service, and children were allocated a key worker who took time to get to know their likes, dislikes, and daily care needs. Parents told us: "Keyworkers in my child's room have made both myself and my child fit in so well! All keyworkers are very approachable and very understanding", and "I feel supported not only by my child's keyworker but all of the staff, they are all very caring and considerate." This showed that trusting relationships had been built.

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 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, which provided an unhurried, relaxed atmosphere and ensured a caring and positive social experience. Some staff were task-oriented during lunchtime, meaning they did not always interact with children. Children were encouraged to serve their own foods and drinks, which helped develop their independence.

Staff knew children well. Personal care plans identified children's likes and dislikes, and included some targets to support children's development. We suggested that care plans be further developed to ensure they contained clearer strategies that show how children's needs will be met. This would support staff in helping children develop and progress in their learning.

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 with the sand outside with their friends and could follow their interests as they explored their environment. The service supported children's movement between indoor and outdoor spaces. This ensured children could lead their play and benefitted from extended periods outdoors.

Children knew the routine of the day well. For example, the children outside in the big garden removed the cover for the sand pit at the start of the day with little support needed from the adults. Children were developing lifelong learning skills.

Children were visibly happy, confident, and actively accessing all available areas. Children had opportunities to take part in stories, decorate biscuits, make spiders, dress up and sing songs. As a result, children

engaged well with each other and played cooperatively, using their imagination and curiosity to develop their play and learning.

A new system for planning and tracking children's learning was in place; however, we found the approach was not consistent across the whole staff team. Some experiences that children had initiated were not always recorded or tracked. We discussed the benefits of staff being more responsive in their planning and developing strands of learning that are based on and respond to individual children's interests. Staff would benefit from having clearer expectations in their delivery and evaluations of play and learning and the opportunities on offer to children. This would further deepen and enhance children's learning through enriching their experiences, and support children to lead on their own play and learning through responsive play-based learning.

We would encourage staff and management to continue to develop play and learning through focused observations, effective assessments, while providing provocations, reflecting, and reviewing the environment. We suggested that management consider consulting with staff about child-led learning in each area. This will further enhance the breadth, progression, and depth of play and learning.

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. There was some homely touches, sofa, cushions, and bean bags. We discussed with the manager how extending the use of soft furnishings across the service could further support children's emotional wellbeing.

Staff had developed and set up play spaces to support different types of play, encouraging children to select resources for play easily. For example, slime, pumpkin carving, home corner and outdoors. Children had access to a variety of experiences; for example, staff had a Fire Friday in the garden where they were heating up soup and making toast for the children to have for a snack outside in the big garden. As a result, children were having fun and interacting in positive experiences along with their peers.

Children had free flow access to outdoors and there were opportunities for children to climb, run and take part in risky play. Children were confident and independent at putting on their outdoor clothing and footwear. It was evident children had regular and daily access to the outdoors. As a result, children's health, wellbeing, and independence were being encouraged and supported.

We encouraged staff and management to consider ways that the environment could be developed to support children's curiosity and creativity. Children could experience more deep and meaningful play through access to more natural open-ended resources. For example, developing natural and open-ended resources to inspire imagination, curiosity, creativity, and imagination. This will ensure children are challenged at the appropriate level for their stage of development and learning.

Some infection prevention and control (IPC) measures were in place to keep children safe. For example, tables were cleaned before and after meals. Staff washed their hands often throughout the day. However,

there were times when this should have been more vigilant to prevent the potential spread of infection; for example, after touching the floor. This would keep children safe.

Children accessed the wider community to go on local walks and learn about planting and growing; for example, at their local gardening group Galston Dome. This supported children to learn about how plants grow and helped them 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.

We recognise that there have been changes within the management and staff team since the last inspection. Throughout the inspection, the team responded well taking on advice and encouragement when suggestions were made. We found relationships were developing well within the team and management and staff were committed to the development of the service. The team worked well together to establish a shared vision, delivering the best outcomes for children and families.

The service had developed a monitoring calendar and an improvement plan, identifying key priorities to support improvements for children and families. This involved shared responsibilities throughout the team. For example, this involved staff taking on lead roles to develop particular areas of practice. Key areas for improvement included monitoring staff practice, children's personal plans, medication, new planning processes, and the environment where development work undertaken had began impacting positively on children. Management shared feedback to staff with areas of strength as well as any areas of improvement. This was supporting staff to review and reflect on their practice while understanding their roles and responsibilities in relation to caring for children.

We recognised the changes that have been made to improve children's play and learning. The manager and staff met regularly to discuss children needs, experiences, areas that were working well, and areas of improvement. We encouraged the manager and staff to continue to develop this to ensure that any improvements are sustained and that they continue to make progress in developing the service. This could support positive 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 inform how they 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 could support staff reflection on practice and promote positive outcomes for children.

Staff had developed positive relationships and effective communication with parents. Parents were welcomed into the service at drop-off and collection times, and the team promoted an open-door policy. Parents were invited to parents' 'Stay and Play' and 'Fire Friday', and the manager communicated regularly through online learning journals. This helped build relationships with parents and helped meet the needs of the children. Parents told us they received regular updates, "The learning journal is regularly updated to keep parents informed", and "I receive regular updates through the learning journals which I always like to see, and also receive informal feedback every day about how my child has been during the day." As a result,

parents were encouraged to participate and were informed about their child's play, learning and development.

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 as a team, and their different skills and knowledge complimented each other. A parent told us, "Every staff member goes out of their way to make sure the kids are happy and safe." Staff moved in response to children's requests; for example, when children wanted to return inside, staff supported the children to do so. 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. This supported better outcomes for children by ensuring their safety.

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. This created a warm and safe environment for children.

Numerous changes within the service had affected the staff. For instance, new planning methods, tracking systems, personal plans, and online learning journals are being implemented. It will take time to fully integrate these changes and assess their impact on improving the service. These changes should lead to positive outcomes for children.

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, supporting children, what worked well within the nursery, and any areas they wanted to improve.

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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