

Christie Park PS ELCC Day Care of Children

Christie Park School
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Alexandria
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 February 2025

Service provided by:
West Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Christie Park PS ELCC is a day care of children service provided by West Dunbartonshire Council and is located in Alexandria. The service operates from within a large playroom within Christie Park Primary School. It is close to public transport links and local amenities.

The service provides care to a maximum of 26 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school.

Children have access to a large playroom with direct access to an enclosed outdoor learning environment that is freely accessed throughout their nursery session.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 and 7 February 2025. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was also present as part of the Care Inspectorates quality assurance process.

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 a small number of children using the service
- gathered the feedback from 12 family members of children using the service
- spoke with staff and management present on the days we visited the service
- gathered feedback from 4 staff using a questionnaire
- observed staff practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing and responsive care from staff that encouraged them to feel valued and included.
- Staff and families worked extremely well together to meet children's needs.
- Play spaces enabled children to lead their own learning, make choices in their play and move freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces.
- A relaxed pace of the day benefited children, enabling them to experience deep engagement in their play.
- Meaningful quality assurance and effective self-evaluation contributed to a culture of continuous improvement, supporting positive outcomes for children and their families
- Staff were passionate in their roles and dedicated to support the nursery to continue to develop and improve.

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?	5 - Very 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.

A welcoming and friendly atmosphere was created by staff who greeted children and families with smiles, this made them feel relaxed and at ease. Parents were invited into the playroom each day at drop off and pick up times. All parents told us they had strong connections with staff, with one parent sharing they felt it was a "home from home environment". This allowed for positive interactions and meaningful conversations to ensure staff were aware of children's needs. This approach built trust and strengthened connections between children, families and staff.

Staff fostered a nurturing environment through their patience, care and compassion. Lots of cuddles, happy laughter and singing made children feel secure, valued and loved. Staff respected children's personal preferences such as bringing favourite soft toys and blankets from home. In addition calm quiet spaces provided opportunities for children to regulate their emotions.

Children were happy and confident, they were cared for by staff who knew them extremely well. All parents agreed that staff knew their children well, one parent said "staff knew their child well and made them feel special as they understood their likes and dislikes". Staff were well informed of children's needs and interests and planned accordingly to support them. For example, their physical and emotional needs, resulting in positive outcomes and enhanced wellbeing for children.

Personal plans were in place for all children, their voice and input was valued. Parents strongly agreed that they were involved in creating their child's plan, which included strategies on how staff supported their children's health, wellbeing and communication. Staff worked closely with families and other professionals to develop these, ensuring a consistent approach to children's development at both home and nursery. Regular reviews and daily communication kept staff informed. This enabled each child to reach their potential.

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried. Parents helped children daily using picture cards to choose their lunch, this developed children's decision-making skills and made them feel valued. The service increased staffing levels at lunchtime to support children's requests, needs and ensure their safety when eating. Children enjoyed relaxed, friendly conversations with staff and their peers, this developed their communication and language. To support independence and fine motor skills children were encouraged to self-serve using appropriate sized jugs and tongs helping to develop skills for life. Additionally children were involved in growing vegetables in the nursery garden, this helped them to develop a positive attitude towards healthy eating. Children had a positive mealtime experience enjoying a healthy, nutritious meal that met their dietary requirements.

Staff consistently provided personal care with sensitivity, dignity, and respect. As part of the daily routine children were supported in developing healthy tooth brushing habits, as a result children understood the benefits of tooth brushing to promote good hygiene. Children were keen to brush their teeth and chatted about the colours of their tooth brush and what their symbols were. A child proudly shared their learning scrapbook, showing a page with "happy teeth" and "sad teeth" as they revisited their learning.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning.

Children were happy and having fun, they thrived in an environment where they confidently made choices about their play. One child told us, they like coming to play with their friends. There was a wide range of experiences for the children to explore. Children particularly enjoyed playing in the garden, building with blocks and being creative as they made models, drew pictures and painted. As a result children were independent in decision making, motivated and highly engaged in their play.

The pace of the day was relaxed, staff worked well together to prioritise seamless transitions for children. This was a key strength of the service, which positively benefited all, resulting in a calm, inviting and stimulating environment for the children to learn in and explore.

Staff valued children's right to play, they planned responsively for children by providing rich engaging experiences that met their needs and interests. For example, providing extra materials such as a variety of different colours of paint and scissors to further support creativity. Skilled staff provided support and extended learning when necessary. This resulted in children being highly engaged in their play and learning, fostering a genuine love of learning and a strong sense of wellbeing.

A literacy rich environment was embedded throughout the service, staff ensured opportunities for children to develop and enhance early literacy skills. Children had access to a wide range of literacy resources, including books, mark-making materials, environmental print, and technology. A popular choice for children was using the smart board where they could practice writing letters and numbers, draw and play games. Children were confident and making good progress in early literacy.

Numeracy experiences were highly visible through play. Staff and children used mathematical language with confidence to problem solve. For example, when counting, building models and exploring dice and coins. This encouraged children to think about numbers, quantity and shape in play. Children successfully completed matching and sorting games which motivated them to learn and increased their confidence.

Staff tracked children's development in literacy and numeracy, this was monitored to ensure children were making steady progress and to ensure support and challenge was offered where appropriate. Daily experiences were planned by key staff around children's interests. The service valued flexibility, allowing children to choose experiences, locations, and preferred staff, this increased engagement and security. Staff were extremely skilled at sharing observations with one another to ensure children's learning needs were met.

Children's learning journeys were shared with families, they received regular updates on their child's learning through an online app and learning scrapbooks. One parent told us they are always getting updates through the online app and another shared, that they can see their child's learning book whenever they ask. This enabled parents to support children's development at home. Children took ownership of their own learning scrap books, they enjoyed sharing them with others and happily reflected on learning and achievements. This built children's confidence and self-esteem.

The thoughtful organisation of playrooms and resources allowed children to move freely between indoor and outdoor areas, enabling them to independently access additional resources to extend their play. Outdoor experiences supported children to develop a sense of wonder about the world. They were interested to learn about wildlife including whale rescue and the impact of litter which deepened their understanding. Spaces were intentionally set up to spark curiosity and engagement, with high-quality resources ensuring enriching learning opportunities.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were nurtured in a warm, welcoming, home from home environment where they felt comfortable and relaxed. Very good use of natural and soft lighting contributed to the cosy atmosphere. Children's photos, artwork and achievements were attractively displayed around the playroom this helped them to feel valued.

Staff had thoughtfully designed the indoor and outdoor areas, maximising space to best support children. The spacious playroom was well-organised, offering opportunities for imagination play and discovery. Additional to the cosy spaces created there were two additional quiet spaces that the children made good use of known as the 'nest' and 'butt and ben' which included soft furnishings, cushions, blankets, and books. These spaces supported emotional regulation and fostered feelings of safety.

Children were extremely confident moving freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Staff understood the importance of outdoor play and were passionate about providing it. Recently children had shown an interest in having snack outdoors, as a result staff had planned to further develop the outdoor snack area, meaning children would no longer have to come indoors for snack which meant less interruptions to their play.

A designated cloakroom ensured easy access to waterproof clothing and wellies to promote outdoor play in all weather. The well designed outdoor space, featured a range of surfaces and sheltered areas, providing opportunities for relaxation, observation, and exploration, contributing to their overall wellbeing.

The service enriched children's experiences by actively making good use of the local community with regular walks, visits to the shops, park outings that nurtured a sense of belonging. Additionally regular visits to the forest offered a wealth of benefits such as, connecting with nature, developing understanding of environmental responsibility, and instilling a sense of wonder and respect for nature.

Staff attractively presented resources that were well-maintained and easily accessible to children. Low level shelves and baskets were arranged to display available resources ensuring children could clearly see what was available, additional materials were provided upon request. The resources were presented to stimulate children's exploration and imagination.

A range of robust safety measures were in place, including a locked garden gate, secure entry with a buzzer system, however staff preferred to welcome parents at the door. Staff made use of walkie talkies to communicate with each other which ensured children's safety and supervision. Daily safety checklists and risk assessments were used by staff to proactively identify potential hazards. This minimised risk and ensured the overall safety for children.

Children learned about safety through play-based activities and displays. The use of a toy elephant named SIMOA from the Care Inspectorate's 'Keeping Children Safe guidance' helped children understand and develop safety concepts. Parents were actively informed about these safety practices through newsletters and were encouraged to share this good practice at home to keep children safe.

Very good infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection, this promoted a safe environment for children and families. These included daily cleaning of the premises, hygienic nappy changing facilities and good hand hygiene.

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.

Effective leadership was embedded within the service. All staff felt supported and included which resulted in strong partnerships. This gave staff confidence and sense of value, which motivated them to take on leadership roles, such as eco-coordinator and forest kindergarten champion. Staff enthusiastically embraced these roles, which positively impacted on the children.

The service was well led, a shared vision and understanding of what a high-quality service looked like was evident among all staff. They were knowledgeable about the service's strengths and areas for development and were committed to make positive changes that benefited children.

Through consultation with families the 'HEART' values and aims were created, this included for children to be happy, encouraged, achieve, ready to learn and develop a sense of togetherness. This was fully embedded within the service ethos.

A shared approach enabled staff and parents to understand children's priorities and what mattered to them, this was reflected within the environment. During the settling in process all children and families were presented with a silk heart in relation to the values, this was positively received and provided comfort and a sense of security for children and families during this important transition. This approach further enhanced the nurturing home-from-home environment. Children were genuinely happy in the service, one parent told us "My child is always happy". The shared approach helped staff and parents understand children's priorities and what mattered to them.

All families agreed that their views were actively sought to shape the type of service being provided. One parent told us, their views were always welcomed and they felt listened to by staff and another told us "parents are consulted for feedback regularly". A variety of feedback methods, including a wish display, suggestion box, ensured parents' voices were heard. Staff used the feedback they received to make positive changes to improve outcomes for children.

Staff were provided with designated time to reflect and share daily experiences with each other. This resulted in a child-centred approach that respected children's rights to have a voice, which influenced the care they received. Staff shared that time out was invaluable, giving them confidence that they were 'getting it right' for every child.

The service promoted a culture for continuous improvement which has led to the delivery of high-quality care and support. Through effective self-evaluation and meaningful reflection of practice they had identified strengths and areas for development. Well established quality assurance processes were in place which included audits of infection control, recruitment, accidents and medication.

The service improvement plan priorities positively enhanced the outcomes for children. Their commitment to improvement demonstrated that children were at the heart of all they do.

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 key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

The consistency and continuity of the staff team enabled them to build strong, respectful working relationships. Staff were extremely passionate about their role of caring for children. They were dedicated to improve outcomes for children and supported each other to do this. All families strongly agreed that the staff were a key strength of the service and two families described the staff as "amazing".

Staff worked well as a team and were passionate about their professional development and continuously participated in personalised training to enhance their skills and learning. Training experiences had a positive impact and staff were enthusiastic about future training opportunities. For example, the introduction of forest kindergarten which enhanced children's play and learning outdoors. During discussions staff told us they found training valuable and implemented this into their practice, and shared key learning with colleagues.

We observed that staff were deployed effectively to meet ratios and children's needs. Careful deployment ensured consistent care, meaning children were cared for by staff who knew them well. Effective communication was used to ensure daily tasks were completed without interrupting children's play. For example, staff used softer tones when speaking to each other and the children.

Staff understood the importance of having positive relationships with children and families. They encouraged them to participate in events and gave them opportunities to be involved in the life of the service. This included stay-and-play sessions and forest visits which supported meaningful interactions between children, families and staff.

Staff shared that they were extremely happy and genuinely enjoyed coming to work each day and felt a strong sense of family within the service. Positive relationships and nurturing practices were at the heart of their approach.

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?	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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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