

Beith Primary School Early Years Class Day Care of Children

Glebe Road
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 February 2025

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003017301

About the service

Beith Primary School Early Years Class is a day care of children service situated in the residential area of Beith. The service is provided by North Ayrshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 50 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of our inspection, 63 children were registered with the service. Across the morning and afternoon sessions, 59 children attended on both days.

The service operates from within Beith Primary School. Children have access to an entrance area, a large playroom, a quiet room, toilets, enclosed gardens, a school gym and lunch hall, and a lunch room within the nursery. The service is close to transport routes and other local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 25 February 2025 between 09:45 and 17:15 and Wednesday 26 February 2025 between 09:15 and 15:30. We gave feedback to the service on Thursday 27 February 2025. 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 and families using the service
- received 20 completed Microsoft Forms questionnaires
- spoke with staff and the senior leadership team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them well.
- Staff and families worked well together to meet children's needs.
- Children formed positive relationships with staff and developed friendships with their peers.
- Children were supported to lead their own play and have fun.
- Children had daily access to outdoor play and fresh air, supporting their overall wellbeing.
- The nursery was welcoming, comfortably furnished, clean and well-maintained.
- Staff should continue to support children in developing their understanding of identifying and managing risks in different situations.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes contributed to a culture of continuous improvement, supporting positive outcomes for children and families.
- Staff felt appreciated and valued by the leadership team and one another, which created a happy, motivated team dedicated to providing the best care.
- Staffing levels were sufficient to meet the children's needs.
- Professional development reviews allowed staff and the leadership team to discuss individual strengths and areas for development.
- Staff should continue reflecting on their learning to enhance performance in their roles and meet the service's expectations and overall success.

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 different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff interactions were kind and respectful. As a result, children formed positive relationships with staff and developed friendships with their peers. Staff supported children when they played with their friends in a warm, caring, and nurturing way that was responsive to their needs.

Children experienced dignity and respect and were kept clean and comfortable during their sessions. Staff supported children with personal care, such as promptly changing nappies or wet clothes after play. Children used the toilets on their own or with staff support. This approach helped children become familiar with personal care routines and supported their independence.

Each child had a personal care plan and an additional support for learning plan when needed. These plans included set targets and strategies. The plans were developed with children's families. One parent commented, "I have had target meetings with my child's keyworker, and there are several reminders to update care plans on journals. I also have the opportunity to chat daily with staff to inform them of any care needs." Another said, "Nothing is done without the consent of parents, and it's a joint decision for our children." This helped ensure consistency in meeting children's health and wellbeing needs and children's care, play, and learning between the setting and home, supporting their progression.

During the inspection, the children did not require any medication to be administered. Medication was stored safely to support emergency treatment. Consistency in the recording formats was needed, particularly in aligning them with the prescription labels. This would help support the children's ongoing health, wellbeing, and safety.

Meals were healthy and nutritious and adhered to NHS healthy eating guidelines. Dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances, and cultural needs, were considered to ensure children's safety and preferences. Staff shared what children had eaten at the end of their sessions with families, supporting communication between the setting and home.

Children helped set the table before the first sitting of lunch in the designated lunchroom in the nursery. Children who used the school lunch hall also collected their cutlery and food on a tray. Suitable crockery was provided, and children disposed of their food waste when finished. This practice promoted children's life skills and fostered independence. Staff sat with children during meals, ensuring their safety. Staff and children engaged in conversations, which promoted positive relationships and children's social and communication skills.

Children could rest or sleep in a quiet room, which supported their emotional wellbeing. Their sleep routines reflected their individual needs and their families' wishes. Staff monitored children while they slept, supporting their safety.

Families were welcomed into the cloakroom at drop-off and pick-up times to discuss their children's routines and speak with staff. This created a welcoming environment and fostered strong attachments between staff, children, and families. One parent commented, "We are welcomed by name and feel a part of the early year's community. Staff are approachable and have a great understanding of both my children's likes and dislikes." Another said, "I have strong relationships with all staff, but particularly my child's keyworker. I feel I can approach them with any questions or if I need support. The new management team are always present and on hand to answer questions."

To further support a welcoming environment for children and families, we directed the service to the guidance document "Me, My Family, and My Childcare Setting." Available here: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/how-we-support-improvement/quality-improvement-programmes-and-topics/me-my-family-and-my-childcare-setting/>

Transitions were carefully planned and managed through age-appropriate experiences to help children become familiar with the nursery and school routine. These experiences included family engagement programmes such as the Peep Learning Together programme, baby massage sessions, and a Lego club. One parent commented, "We are made to feel exceptionally welcome as a family, with my youngest attending the peep groups and my eldest in their preschool year." Primary one teachers also visited the children in the nursery, and regular visits were arranged for preschool children to familiarise themselves with the school canteen and the primary one playground. This approach helped reduce any anxieties that children may have had and build their confidence.

Staff understood safeguarding procedures well and had undertaken child protection training. This helped build their confidence and the skills needed to provide a service that protects children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Staff supported children's right to play by providing a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Children could play indoors or outdoors in one of three gardens: the nursery, school, or Hive. This helped children develop self-confidence, independence, and self-esteem while making them aware of limits, boundaries, and challenges in their play, all while having fun.

Children were learning balance techniques during indoor and outdoor play, such as using large building blocks and outdoor equipment in the school playground. This helped them develop their gross motor skills, coordination, and core muscles while reinforcing transferable skills and revisiting their earlier learning. They also engaged in schematic learning, such as exploring trajectory, when they rolled and threw objects and predicted where those objects would land.

There were some opportunities for children to follow their interests during play, such as making paper aeroplanes and bathing the dolls. This helped children use transferable skills and make connections in their play and learning.

Children had opportunities to participate in Book Bug and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) to support their social communication, emotional wellbeing, and interpersonal problem-solving skills.

Play experiences and resources in the home corner, book area, and writing table helped children develop early literacy skills based on their interests. Early numeracy was encouraged through puzzles and activities that taught colours and numbers. Children also learned mathematical concepts such as subitising, which involves recognising the number of items without needing to count each individually. While having fun during play, these experiences influenced their learning.

Sensory resources, such as sand, water, and play dough, and heuristic materials, such as natural objects typically found at home, were beginning to foster children's creativity, curiosity, and exploration. Providing additional opportunities for play to be extended and consolidate children's learning would be beneficial. Staff should reflect on how they can effectively support water play and outdoor learning in the nursery and Hive, particularly the quality and quantity of materials provided.

Some staff used open-ended questioning in their interactions to enhance children's higher-order thinking skills. Experienced staff should continue to role model effective questioning techniques to support consistency in practice for all staff.

Children had the opportunity to enhance their digital literacy by accessing their learning journals on electronic tablets and participating in yoga activities using the SMART board. The service provides a variety of educational games on the SMART board and fun, interactive coding activities using Bee-bot coding equipment to help children develop basic logic skills. These experiences could be offered to children daily to encourage creativity and teach new skills.

Staff used tracking and assessment tools to document intentional learning and children's progress and development. Additionally, floorbooks were used to evaluate spontaneous play and learning experiences. Observations of children's play and learning were shared with families through an online digital platform. Senior leaders recognised that further staff development in writing observations would improve the consistency and quality of these records, ensuring that play and learning were effective and that children were making progress toward their early learning goals.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were provided with a welcoming and comfortable environment, furnished to a good standard. Informative displays in the entrance areas encouraged family engagement. Each child had a personal space for their belongings. This contributed to their sense of security, emotional wellbeing and inclusion.

Overall, the playroom temperature and ventilation met the children's comfort needs. Staff should be mindful of keeping the playroom door to the nursery garden closed for children who play indoors.

The nursery was clean and well-maintained, which helped minimise the risk of infection. Staff should continue to review hand hygiene routines outdoors and ensure toilet and nappy changing areas are checked throughout the day to prevent cross-contamination. This would further support the service's commitment to infection prevention and control.

Children's safety was met through comprehensive measures, such as boundary fencing, gates, and a secure entry system, ensuring children's safety. Staff had undertaken risk assessments for the setting, kept an attendance register, and updated the information throughout the day.

Children were learning about risks in the Hive garden and how to stay safe, such as using the fire pit, climbing the tree, and using real-life tools. A visual board on the door leading to the nursery garden at children's eye level helped children communicate their preferences, and staff know the children's whereabouts. Staff could use the Care Inspectorate's Keeping Children Safe - look, think, act campaign (SIMOA) and child-friendly risk assessment tools to consider ways to involve children and raise awareness of all potential risks in their setting. This would enable children to manage risks for themselves, make informed decisions about their play, and keep them safe.

Children's accidents and incidents were systematically recorded on a digital platform. Staff shared this information with families by telephone or in person at the end of each session. We discussed where information could be more detailed and include any administered first aid treatment.

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 headteacher of the primary school and the interim nursery leadership team actively participated in the inspection process, demonstrating a strong commitment to providing quality service to children and families. Their openness to feedback and willingness to make immediate improvements during the inspection showed their capacity for growth.

The service's values were shared with the school community to foster a nurturing environment grounded in respect, where children were inspired to learn. These values were recently updated with input from staff, children, and families, and they were reflected in practice, guiding the direction of the service.

Relevant policies were reviewed, updated, and aligned with current guidance and legislation in response to changes in service delivery. This ensured that children were kept safe and staff had a shared understanding of the service's expectations.

Senior leaders had begun monitoring and auditing specific areas such as medication management, accidents and incidents, online learning journals, and children's observations. This contributed to the ongoing quality of service provided to children.

A self-evaluation tool incorporating feedback from individual staff members has aided the newly formed staff team in planning key priorities that align with the improvement plan shared with the school.

The service provides opportunities for families to feel included, valued, and respected. These opportunities include family engagement events, an open-door policy, QR codes for sharing suggestions for improvements and sharing children's learning journals to enhance communication between the service and children's homes. The service should continue its commitment to developing a comprehensive plan that promotes involvement from all stakeholders in the improvement process to enhance play and learning experiences, improve the quality of care sessions, and ensure children have access to high-quality facilities, thereby supporting positive changes.

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

During the inspection, the service was appropriately staffed. Staff had diverse experiences, knowledge, and skills, and they were forming as a team due to recent modifications in the delivery service model implemented by North Ayrshire Council.

Families shared that they had developed a strong connection with the staff caring for their children. One parent commented, "There has been a big change in the team, but very quickly, we felt that all the new team members knew my children by name and are personable and approachable during drop-off and pickup." Another parent said, "I feel comfortable speaking to staff whenever I need to. We have a good rapport."

A process was in place for mentoring and supporting temporary staff and student practitioners, using the skills and knowledge of the existing staff team. Staff felt supported by the leadership team and their colleagues, which promoted morale and created a happy, motivated team dedicated to providing the best care.

Interactions between staff and children were caring, relaxed, and loving. Staff spoke to children at their height, making eye contact to ensure they felt safe and secure.

Staff levels were sufficient to meet the children's needs. During key times of the day, such as children's mealtimes and arrival/departure periods, staff recognised increased activity and planned accordingly to ensure smooth transitions for the children. Further discussions and planning for staff lunch breaks would enhance staff deployment and communication, improve staff-child interactions, and ensure children's safety in accessing all service provisions.

Professional development reviews allowed the leadership team and staff to discuss individual strengths and areas for development. Staff had leadership opportunities and received training tailored to specific skill gaps and development needs. They should continue reflecting on their learning to enhance performance in their roles and better equip them to meet the service's expectations and overall success.

Staff were well-informed about good practice guidance documents and used these resources to enhance their practices and improve play areas. During in-service days, staff met as a team and communicated regularly through emails, a communication diary, and a private WhatsApp group. This approach helped strengthen staff communication across shift patterns and secure children's outcomes.

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

A more systematic monitoring system should be developed to monitor the quality of the service provision and to support staff in developing the service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to age 16. Standard 13: Improving the Service.

This area for improvement was made on 18 May 2016.

Action taken since then

There were systems in place to monitor and audit service quality, support staff development, and enhance children's outcomes.

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	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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