

Airth Primary School, Early Learning and Childcare Class Day Care of Children

Elphinstone Crescent
Airth
Falkirk
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 March 2025

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003015554

About the service

Airth Primary School, Early Learning and Childcare Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 42 children at any one time. The age range of children will be from three-years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is located in Airth, near Falkirk and is based in Airth Primary School. The environment consisted of a dedicated entrance, an open plan playroom with kitchen area, and children's toilets. The library and gym hall provided access to additional space and children were able to directly access the enclosed garden. The local community provided further experiences for children including outdoor learning in local green spaces, and visits to the older people's care home.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 11 March 2025 between 09:00 and 16:00 and Wednesday 12 March between 08:30 and 12:45. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children using the service
- spoke with four parents and carers and took account of five responses to our electronic questionnaire
- spoke with seven staff and management
- observed staff practice and how their interactions with children supported their routines, play and learning
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were cared for by staff who knew them well and understood how to meet their individual needs.
- Children were valued and respected as care and support was delivered in a warm, kind, and compassionate way.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation had been used effectively to make positive changes within the service.
- The committed staff team were keen to develop in their skills and knowledge to provide a quality service for families.
- A shared vision for the service would promote further developments.

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 evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

All staff implemented the values of the service which meant a culture of respect and inclusiveness was embedded in practice. Children experienced secure attachments as staff promoted warm and nurturing relationships. This was evident as children sought out cuddles and reassurance from them. These sensitive and caring interactions meant children were happy, confident, and settled quickly on arrival at nursery. We saw they were supported throughout the day by staff who understood their emotions.

As children played, we saw they had developed nice friendships with each other. They had a sense of belonging as they felt welcomed and safe in the setting. There was lots of laughter and fun as they played together. Parent's shared, "The staff are great and cannot talk highly enough of them. Both my children have really enjoyed their time at nursery." And "We have had a really positive experience with the staff since our child has started. They seem to genuinely take an interest in the children and have a very nurturing environment."

Partnership working with parents was well established due to effective communication with families. Home visits before children started nursery were valued by parents. They enabled information to be shared and relationships with staff to be built. Parents felt included as they agreed, and were involved in the settling in process.

A range of information was gathered and used to plan children's care. As a result, personal plans were used effectively to support each child's individual needs. Where needed, detailed plans outlined strategies and techniques tailored for children's particular needs. This meant they had positive experiences as staff had a consistent approach to their care. To improve this, we asked the service to consider the format of six monthly reviews. For example, including more open ended questions. They advised this would be improved as part of the work they were undertaking in respect of record keeping. Parents confirmed they were involved in shaping their child's care and shared, "I have regular meetings to discuss my child as well as weekly pictures." And "My child has only recently started in the nursery. In this short space of time, the staff have been very welcoming and approachable. I have been able to discuss queries I had in regard to the daily procedures with the Senior and was met with a very open and helpful response."

Meal and snack times were relaxed and sociable experiences for children. Staff used the routine well to help children develop self help skills. They learned about hygiene as they washed hands before eating and helped cut up fruit, butter their toast and pour drinks. Staff used these experiences to talk about healthy eating and chat with children about their food choices. Children benefitted from the social time as they talked to friends and staff about activities they were involved in.

We confirmed that best practice guidance was followed to ensure the safe storage and administration of medication. We advised updated guidance was available so they maintained the good practice in place.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefitted from a well organised environment where a range of activities supported their development and interests. This enabled them to lead their play both indoors and outdoors. Open ended resources helped children use their imagination, curiosity and investigation. As a result, we saw children were busy and had fun as they played with their friends. We noted the art area would benefit from more varied resources. Parents liked that "My child plays outside and inside and is allowed to learn in whatever situation suits their skill/development" and "My child goes to the local care home and play groups as part of his learning and development".

Staff supported play very well as they were down at children's level. Skilled interactions and good use of questions enabled children to think about their play and how they wanted to develop their games. As staff were enthusiastic and responded positively to them, children shared their ideas for developing their play and learning. For example, finding pictures on the Ipad that children wanted to draw. Respecting children's choice and rights meant they spent long periods of time at activities. Staff used play experiences very well to promote children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Through their play children said "That's my name." As they sounded out the letters in it.

A new planning format had been introduced to record children's learning. This will continue to be embedded to plan, evaluate and identify 'next steps' so children make progress. In addition, floor books contained information about children's experiences. This approach enabled them to be involved in and lead their learning. For example, when children asked to make smoothies they were supported to learn about healthy eating.

Staff reflected well together and shared significant observations about children. Learning journeys therefore, contained well written, meaningful observations that gave a clear picture of how children were making progress. 'Next steps' were identified to ensure children's continued learning. Staff were improving the layout of the journals so information was in date order. This change meant it would be easier to track children's development and enhance reviews. Parents shared, "We get regular updates on seesaw and meetings with staff to talk about child development." And "Fantastic introduction to the schooling experience, staff really invest in the children to develop and be themselves."

The community was well used to enhance children's experiences. Links with the local care home enabled children to join in activities with older people. Going to the community garden encouraged children to learn about planting and growing. Staff planned to further develop these opportunities to ensure children's involvement in their community. Parents shared "We are looking forward to our child experiencing walks to the local area/pineapple in the future and wheelie Wednesdays."

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Staff had created a safe, welcoming and well organised environment which was inviting and supported children's learning and development. Areas were thoughtfully arranged so that children could choose what they wanted to do. The layout meant children had space to develop their games and play as they could move resources around. We saw that children had positive experiences as they influenced the pace of their day as staff listened to them and supported their choices.

Staff talked about planned refurbishment that will benefit the nursery. The playroom will be improved with more cupboards space, decoration and flooring. Outdoors a new, higher fence will promote safety. Once changes have taken place, staff plan to enhance the areas with more environmental print in and outdoors. The sensory area would also be increased to offer children a calm space if needed.

A focus on being outdoors was encouraged as 'free flow' access to outside was in place. This enabled children to choose where they wanted to play throughout the day. Large equipment, and open ended resources offered children a variety of play experiences. Playing in the natural environment, promoted their well-being as they benefitted from fresh air and exercise. Children knew what resources were available as they asked "Can we go to the mugga?" as they wanted to play football.

We were satisfied that the environment was well ventilated, hand washing promoted and regular cleaning took place. These measures were effective at minimising the spread of infection. Risk assessments and daily checks were used well to achieve and maintain a safe environment. We saw that children were accounted for during the day.

Staff were security conscious as they supervised when children were arriving and leaving the service. A well established system was in place for maintenance and repairs. This meant the environment was well maintained and safe for children.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children benefitted from a management and staff team who were committed to providing a quality service. Well led self-evaluation and quality assurance had resulted in a shared vision for the development of the service. This had contributed to change which had improved outcomes for children.

National and local guidance had been used by the service to assess their work. This had identified what they did well and identified changes that would improve outcomes for children. As a result, the improvement and action plans reflected priorities that would build on current good practice. A paced approach to change enabled all staff to be involved in the process which made it meaningful for everyone.

Regular tracking, reviews and audits meant that the work of the service was effectively monitored. These measures supported staff in their role as they were mentored and given guidance about their practice. For example, getting feedback to ensure all necessary information was recorded in personal plans and learning journals. This work influenced consistent staff approaches to record keeping.

Team work within the setting meant staff contributed to improvement and changes being made. Staff felt valued as they knew their opinions mattered. Suggestions were listened to and resulted in a whole team approach. Staff shared the initiatives they were involved in to improve outcomes for children. For example, baby book bug had had a positive impact on transition as it helped children settle into nursery when they started.

Staff reflected on their practice and identified areas for their professional development. For example, to support children with additional support needs, they had completed arousal training. This enabled them to

recognise patterns of behaviour and identify strategies that would help children manage their emotions. Children benefitted from a consistent approach which enabled them to build resilience.

As staff continue to build their skills and knowledge, they should continue to expand their leadership roles. For example, improving the learning journal and introducing 'from plant to plate' so children understand where food comes from. We asked that dates are added to support the review process. This helps monitor progress in a timely way and inform any 'next steps'.

Opportunities were in place that supported parents to be involved in the service and share their views. Their opinions were collated and enabled the service to identify action points. One parent said, "We have volunteered time to help build/maintain activities for children within nursery to use". Parents also had opportunities to attend 'stay and play' sessions, baby book club and were involved in any meetings about their child. This meant they felt valued and knew their opinions mattered.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children benefitted from a range of staff skills and experience across the team. They thrived in a welcoming and inclusive environment, created by the shared values of staff.

Staff were very well deployed throughout the service which ensured children benefited from their nursery experience. The pattern of staff attendance had been considered to promote continuity of care across the day and week. Effective communication and a flexible approach meant children were supported in all areas. At busier times, routines had been established which promoted children's safety.

Staff changes were well managed which contributed to positive working relationships. Staff were committed to professional development and used training and best practice guidance to keep up to date. They were enthusiastic in their role which meant children were supported in their learning and development. Parents shared "They (staff) are all fantastic and always do and know what is best by my child."

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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