

Sauchie ELC Day Care of Children

By Holton Cottages
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 March 2025

Service provided by:
Clackmannanshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002713

Service no:
CS2003015581

About the service

Sauchie ELC is a daycare of children service which is provided by Clackmannanshire Council. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 103 children at any one time, aged two years to those not yet attending primary school, of whom there will be a maximum of 15 children aged two to under three years.

Children benefit from direct access to large, enclosed outdoor spaces. This provides them with daily free flow opportunities to play, have fun and learn outdoors. The indoor playrooms have been well considered to ensure children have interesting play and learning opportunities which are responsive to their needs, interests and stage of development. Children can rest and relax in the comfortable, cosy spaces developed by the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 March 2025 between 09:00 and 17:30. Two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

This inspection was part of a pilot to test the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors' developed jointly with Education Scotland. Because this inspection was part of a pilot, no new evaluations (grades) have been awarded.

During the inspection we:

- spoke with children using the service, and two family members
- received 23 completed questionnaires
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from cosy, comfortable spaces to rest and relax, as well as areas to have fun exploring, creating and investigating.
- Staff had a good understanding of the importance of daily outdoor play opportunities for children.
- Children experienced a warm, responsive and respectful approach to their care.
- Supporting children's emotional wellbeing was very important to the service.
- Staff had a strong understanding of safeguarding and child protection responsibilities to ensure children were safe and protected from harm.
- The service worked effectively with other agencies involved in keeping children safe and healthy.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

Quality Indicator – Children experience high quality spaces

Children and families were warmly welcomed into a setting that was well equipped to meet children's needs. Staff had made best use of spaces and resources available to them. Playrooms had been thoughtfully considered and were very well resourced to create an interesting and motivating environment for learning. Children benefitted from cosy, comfortable spaces to rest and relax, as well as areas to have fun exploring, creating and investigating. Diversity and inclusion was promoted by the service to ensure children and families felt included. This gave a strong message to children that they matter.

Staff had a good understanding of children's right to play and learn, and the importance of daily outdoor play opportunities. Children had direct free-flow access to outdoor spaces throughout the session. They told us that they "loved" playing in the garden and especially liked climbing, and swinging in the hammock. Staff responded quickly to children's requests to play outside after lunch. They promptly opened doors and communicated with colleagues to ensure children were accounted for, and appropriately supported. As a result, children's overall wellbeing and right to choose was promoted.

Children were supported and encouraged to consider how safe they felt as they explored and developed gross motor skills, such as climbing and running, in the garden. Staff had a good understanding and embraced a positive approach to risky play, where appropriate. For example, we observed staff talking with children, enquiring "do you think that's safe?" and celebrating their achievements. This meant children were having fun and building self-confidence as they developed skills for life.

Risk assessments helped to minimise risks to children. We discussed involving children and staff when reviewing these, and developing systems to provide a clearer overview. For example, staff signing when they had read and/or reviewed. We also highlighted the Care Inspectorate document, Keeping children safe: Practice notes. This may further support staff to keep children safe as they consider things like, where resources are placed in the garden and the height of fencing.

Playrooms were clean and ventilated throughout the day. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times. Regular cleaning procedures meant any potential spread of infection was kept to a minimum. To further enhance infection prevention and control measures, we discussed ways to support children's handwashing after lunch.

Arrangements for personal care were effectively planned. Staff maintained high levels of infection prevention and control, and children's privacy, dignity and preferences were respected. At the time of inspection, a high number of children required support with toileting and nappy changing. We discussed appropriate changing facilities and were reassured that consideration was being given to this by the service and local authority.

The management and staff team had a very good understanding of the need to protect children's personal information. They were confident in their practice, and our findings supported that sensitive and personal information was being maintained and stored securely.

Effective arrangements were in place to monitor spaces, report maintenance of the setting and equipment. Staff understood the importance of following this up and ensuring repairs were carried out promptly to make sure children experienced high quality spaces.

Children are supported to achieve

Quality Indicator - Nurturing care & support

Children experienced a warm and responsive approach to their care which supported their overall wellbeing. Staff understood the importance of trusting and nurturing relationships for children's growth and development. We observed staff responding sensitively and compassionately to children's differing needs and personalities. Families told us that staff knew their children very well and were "friendly and approachable." As a result, children were happy and relaxed as they were cared for by a skilful staff team.

The management and staff team were mindful of transitions in children's daily lives, and had a very good understanding of their importance. They planned and gave thoughtful consideration to ensure the process was supportive of children and families, and minimized disruptions. For example, home visits were arranged to meet children and families before starting at the setting. This provided an opportunity for them to begin to establish positive and consistent relationships with children. Transitions at other times, such as moving playrooms, were also carefully considered to prioritise children's individual needs and stage of development.

Personal plans included the views of children and families. These were reviewed and updated regularly. Staff used this information, alongside information shared informally by families at drop off and pick up time, to support children's routines. Children with specific needs had more detailed plans where relevant information and clear strategies were recorded. Strong links with other professionals ensured a child centred approach to support. This meant that all children were respected and valued as an individual.

Supporting children's emotional wellbeing was a priority for the service. They had created diverse spaces to support children to play in small groups or alone if they wished. Staff training, 'Let's chat' emotions learning group, and an abundance of meaningful resources helped children to recognise and understand their emotions. This positively impacted on children's ability to regulate their emotions and build social skills.

Children's health and wellbeing needs were being met with appropriate systems in place for storing and recording medication. Staff had undertaken training to support children with particular healthcare needs and supportive relationships with their families had been established.

Nutritious snacks and lunches were provided by the service. The management and staff team had been reviewing, making changes and reflecting on lunchtime experiences for children. Children had some opportunities to develop independence as they self-selected lunch options at the table. We discussed ways to further promote children's independence and encourage important life skills. For example, by involving them in the preparation of snack and helping to set the table for lunch.

Quality Indicator - Safeguarding and child protection

Regular staff training, alongside effective policies and procedures meant staff were skilled in identifying when children might be at risk of harm. Staff spoke confidently about their understanding of safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. Strong leadership ensured arrangements for safeguarding and child protection was integral to the work of the setting. Our findings led us to assess children were better supported to be safe and well cared for.

Children and families experienced positive and trusting relationships with staff who knew them very well. The staff and management team had a very good understanding of the needs of children and families in their community. They had developed strong lines of communication, and worked effectively with other agencies involved in keeping children safe and healthy.

Leaders in the service had developed an intervention group to support children who may have experienced adverse childhood experiences. The 'STAR' (safe, time and respect) group aimed to provide a safe space for children to express their emotions and feelings, and provide emotional support for those who needed it.

The ethos, values and aims of the service strongly promoted children's rights. Staff supported children to develop an understanding of their rights in creative ways. For example, by introducing children to 'Zorf the alien' who visited Sauchie ELC to learn all about children's rights. Staff also encouraged children to share their views in meaningful ways to affect change. The service had achieved a Gold Rights Respecting School award, in recognition of the work they were doing to promote children's rights. As a result, children felt safe as they were cared for by a dedicated staff team.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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