

Abbey View Early Learning and Childcare Centre

Day Care of Children

Abbey View Campus
Hayshead Road
Arbroath
DD11 5FE

Telephone: 01241 464652

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 February 2025

Service provided by:
Angus Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000043

Service no:
CS2024000221

About the service

Abbey View Early Learning and Childcare Centre is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 100 children that are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

The outdoor space has been taken into account when agreeing the maximum number of children aged 3 to not yet attending primary school. Children must have access to the outdoor space at all times.

The service is provided by Angus Council and is situated within Abbey View campus in Arbroath. The service is in a residential area close to shops, parks and other amenities. Children are cared for in a large playroom and have access to an enclosed outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 and 20 February 2025. Feedback was shared with the service on 21 February. 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 information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

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:

- spent time with children using the service
- received questionnaire feedback from five families and seven staff
- spoke with children, staff and leadership
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children had fun and experienced joy as they explored the spaces in the service.
- Children were supported by responsive staff while engaged in various play experiences and activities.
- Children benefitted from a safe and secure environment where they could freely access outdoors.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

Quality indicator - Children experience high quality spaces

Children were cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff worked well together to minimise risks to children, both indoors and outdoors. Children participated in risk assessing their environment outdoors and took great delight in sharing the dangers they might find outside. Our Look, Think, Act campaign to support children to be safe had been fully considered by staff. A large purple elephant was used to bring the practice note to life and make it meaningful for all. One family shared, "I feel that my child is safe in the setting and has so many opportunities to thrive."

The service provided a welcoming ethos to children and families. In the reception area, each child had their own peg with their photograph and name where they stored their bags and jackets. This helped children to feel valued. We noted that the temperature in the cloakroom was much cooler than the playroom. Leadership had already identified this, and this had been shared with maintenance.

All children had access to a large playroom which was furnished to a high standard and benefited from plenty of natural light and ventilation. Some children had regular access to a sensory room and calm space to support their emotional wellbeing. Some nice, homely touches which included sofas, blankets and family photos helped create spaces for children to relax and feel safe. There was scope to develop the nursery environment further to ensure it was as warm, cosy and nurturing as could be for all children. For example, the overhead lights were very bright, which could have an impact on children's wellbeing and the area where children could choose to sleep was not a fully relaxing, restful space. More cosy, quiet, dimly lit areas would provide spaces for all children to access to feel safe and manage their emotions.

Staff recognised the benefits of daily outdoor experiences and outdoor play was valued. Wet suits and gloves were provided for children to support them to be suitably dressed for the outdoors. Children could access the garden area daily and a more natural woodland area once a week. Staff embraced a more benefit-risk approach in the forest, as children engaged in interesting play opportunities, using their imagination and building their self-confidence. Most staff were confident to recognise the potential within natural spaces to support creative thinking and problem solving. Children made up games, expressed joy and had fun in this space.

Children had some opportunities to influence the use of play spaces. Displays reflected some children's interests and these included children's artwork, photographs and child's voice. Children had shown a recent interest in space and the solar system. This was reflected within the resources available to children during the inspection. Some displays could be further developed to ensure they continuously celebrate children's learning journey and reflect their current interests. The leadership team shared with us that this is an area they would like to further develop. This would ensure that all spaces in the service are as inspiring as they can be to children.

The outdoor space was fully enclosed and safe. Children had opportunities for free flow play to the garden during the session. The outdoor area was sensitively structured and provided opportunities for children to physically challenge themselves. Children were supported to develop their imaginations, creativity and gross motor skills in the well-resourced outdoor play area. The numeracy and literacy rich area further enhanced and developed play and learning opportunities outdoors.

Infection prevention and control procedures and regular staff training ensured that the risk of infection for children was minimised. There were appropriate changing facilities for children and during nappy changes children's privacy, dignity and preferences were fully respected throughout.

There were some opportunities for children to recycle materials within the service. The leadership team shared that further opportunities for children to learn about sustainability would be available as they begin to work toward a bronze award for becoming a Rights Respecting School.

Children play and learn

Quality Indicator - Play and learning

Children were having fun and engaged in their play. They shared with us that they liked nursery and fun things to do included drawing, painting and playing outside. Children's comments included, "I like seeing all my friends and doing lots of fun things. My favourite is doing lots of drawing and my teachers help me learn all my stuff for school" and "The garden is so much fun".

Almost all small group times were good opportunities for children and staff to come together. Staff shared the benefits of their small groups to work on children's individual targets. One experience involved reading a story and cutting up fruit for a salad. Children were engaged and enjoyed this experience. The group time experience in the gym hall did not meet a few children's needs. These children disengaged as they waited a significant time to be involved in large group time games. The leadership team were aware that group times should be a meaningful experience for all children. This was an area they were keen to develop further.

A range of approaches were in place to support children's developing language and communication. Books were available in most areas of the nursery, including the outdoors. Children and staff were seen reading books together and singing was naturally incorporated through play. Most staff interactions supported the development of children's communication and language skills through discussions and meaningful conversations.

Opportunities to explore number throughout the environment were rich. A range of mark making opportunities throughout the learning environment was supporting children to achieve and progress. Staff

extended children's learning and encouraged critical thinking and problem-solving through the use of effective questioning, commenting and gesture/visuals where appropriate. Children were beginning to engage in longer conversations and develop sustained shared thinking.

Staff worked with families to support their understanding of the benefits to children of play and learning experiences. Staff shared with us the benefits of the Eat Well Play Well initiative, family nurture groups and learning sessions with families. This approach fostered the development of cooperation with families, which supported children's wellbeing and development. Families shared, "As well as plan review meetings we have been invited in for different sessions to take part in learning sessions along with our child. This has included forest and music sessions for maths week. These sessions are lovely as we get to see what our child has been learning as well as get involved in the session ourselves".

There were good opportunities for children to develop links with the community. Children visited the library and went for regular walks. The leadership team shared this was an area they would like to develop further to ensure these are fully meaningful to children. These plans included developing links with the playgroup and other settings.

The leadership team and staff had worked hard to develop their approach to planning for play and learning. Planning incorporated children's targets and more focus was now placed on individual children's interests. One family shared, "They listen to the children and offer a very wide range of activities to suit all the children and their needs and likes". Progression pathways were used to support staff's understanding and planning for children's next steps. This ensured children were challenged and extending their learning.

Observations of children's learning in journals demonstrated children accessed a good range of experiences and a breadth of learning opportunities. All children had regular observations, and this was quality assured regularly by the leadership team to ensure any areas that had been missed were addressed and plans put in place. Learning journals that we reviewed had next steps in place. The majority of next steps had not been reviewed or achieved for children. Leadership should ensure next steps are specific and achievable. This would support children to progress.

There were some opportunities for children to recognise and celebrate their successes. For example, some artwork was framed and displayed. Staff and children accessed learning journals together to children to reflect on their learning and achievements. There was room to develop this further. For example, the floor books had been a good way to celebrate children's learning and development, though these had not been updated recently. Leadership had recognised that floor books were an area that required redevelopment.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the service registered. Details of upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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