

Tulach ELC

Day Care of Children

Tullibody South Campus
The Orchard
Tullibody
Alloa
FK10 2SD

Telephone: 01259 452 221

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 March 2025

Service provided by:
Clackmannanshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002713

Service no:
CS2003015591

About the service

Tulach ELC is provided by Clackmannanshire Council. The early learning and childcare service is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 150 children aged from birth to those not yet of an age to attend primary school. It is part of a modern purpose-built school campus with access to large playrooms and a large, enclosed garden area. The service is located in Alloa and is close to local amenities such as shops and public transport links.

About the inspection

This pilot inspection was a shared visit between Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland HM Inspectors to test the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors'. The pilot took place on 10 March, 11 March and 12 March 2025. The pilot was carried out by two Care Inspectorate inspectors and one HM inspector.

To prepare for the inspection, the Care Inspectorate 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 shared pilot. Because this inspection was part of a pilot, no new evaluations (grades) have been awarded.

During the inspection, the Care Inspectorate:

- spoke with children using the service
- received 19 completed questionnaires/survey responses from families
- received 10 completed questionnaires from staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Education Scotland will provide a high-level summary of the meetings and discussions held between the HM inspector, senior leaders, stakeholders and practitioners in the setting. This will not include evaluations and will not be published.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from a committed staff team with high aspirations for children and families.
- Children experienced a service that had continuously improved over time.
- Leadership gave strong consideration to the wellbeing of staff, meaning that they felt supported in their role.
- Staff confidently led improvements in the service that improved experiences and outcomes for children.
- Staff deployed themselves effectively to ensure children experienced quality interactions and continuity of care throughout the day.
- Staff knowledge and skills ensured children experienced high quality learning experiences.

Leadership

Quality Indicator – Leadership and management of staff and resources

Children experienced a service that was committed to providing quality care and experiences to children and families. An aspirational vision, which put children at the centre, was evident throughout the service. The shared values of nurture, kindness, love and inspiration were seen in staff interactions and the well-developed environment. For example, an area had been developed for children to reflect on and talk about these values with staff and their peers. One parent shared, "It is a warm and friendly environment. Staff are all welcoming and very kind." This meant children were nurtured, cared for and felt loved.

The service had plans to revisit their vision, values and aims with families and children. We encouraged the service to continue with their plans, as this would ensure that the vision continues to reflect the aspirations of all.

Leaders created conditions where staff felt confident to initiate and lead change. There was a well embedded, shared responsibility and approach to improvements in the service. All staff spoke confidently about their leadership roles and the positive impact this had on outcomes for children. The leadership ensured improvements led by the team were manageable, achievable and impactful. This meant children experienced a service that had continuously improved over time.

A range of quality assurance and self-evaluation was in place to support children to experience sustained quality care. Staff had regular meetings to reflect on their practice and highlight areas of strength and areas to further develop. There was scope to develop some quality assurance systems further to ensure they were robust. For example, the audits of personal plans, medication and staff's registration with a professional body could be more robust to ensure that they identify any gaps. This would ensure children continue to experience quality care.

The service had developed a range of methods to gather data and used this information to celebrate successes and identify areas to be further improved. This data highlighted significantly improved outcomes for children through the many elements of improvement work that had been undertaken. For example, recent work around developing opportunities to support children's numeracy was impacting positively on children's progress.

Staff who had recently started working in the service were supported by an induction which linked to best practice guidance. There was a handbook which highlighted key information to ensure staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities. This supported a shared understanding and approach. New staff had been given a mentor who they could ask advice from or talk about practice. We suggested the service consider dedicating time between new staff and their mentor to allow more regular opportunities to reflect on practice together. This would support a more personalised induction, as conversations may identify further support required.

The provider and leadership team recognised the importance of recruiting and retaining a stable, skilled staff team. Incentives were offered to longer serving staff, for example, an addition of extra annual leave days for longer time served. Careful consideration had been given to staff wellbeing. All staff who responded to questionnaires felt that their own wellbeing was well considered. One staff member shared, "The management team are all very approachable and friendly and I am comfortable and happy to speak to any member of the management team in confidence if I needed to." As a result, children benefitted from continuity of care as staff felt valued and supported to remain in their role.

Quality Indicator – Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Children benefitted from staff who were kind, caring and respectful as they interacted with them. Children were settled, confident and happy across the nursery. One parent shared, "The staff at Tulach are nothing short of amazing. Each member of staff in the Ochil room is friendly, approachable and knowledgeable about my child. They have great attention to detail and make my child feel comfortable and confident." This showed children and families were valued and positive attachments had been formed between staff and children.

Staff had a very good understanding of how children learn and develop. They spoke confidently about how they supported children in their play and learning. They monitored and planned for children's learning using a variety of assessment tools and observations. This informed children's next steps and highlighted the high aspirations of staff for children and families.

A culture of openness and inclusion ensured staff felt comfortable to discuss practice with us and with each other. Staff confidently shared information about their roles with us and were open to feedback. They felt safe to discuss areas of practice that could be improved or if errors had been made. This promoted sustained improvements for children and families.

Regular team meetings and staff training opportunities helped staff to reflect on their practice, learning and development. Staff accessed training linked specifically to their leadership roles. This meant that children benefitted from consistent high-quality experiences. Staff told us they felt valued and supported by management and the wider team. This positive and supportive ethos meant that children were thriving as a result of the loving and nurturing care they experienced from all staff.

Staff were flexible and supported each other in a supportive environment. Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and throughout children's experiences. This included at busier times of the day, for example, at lunch times staff positioned themselves well to ensure that all children benefitted from quality interactions while maintaining very good supervision. Staff breaks were planned for in a way that minimised the impact on experiences for children. One parent told us, "I don't know staffing ratio, however, what I can say is I feel all of my child's needs are met at this nursery. When I pick her up, she is happy, calm and regulated which suggest good care." This meant children experienced high quality interactions and continuity of care throughout their session.

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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