

Bearsden Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

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East Dunbartonshire
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 September 2024

Service provided by:
East Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003380

Service no:
CS2021000077

About the service

Bearsden Early Years Centre is registered to provide care to a maximum of 95 children not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. No more than 16 are aged under three years. No more than 79 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. The manager is also the head teacher of Bearsden Primary School.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in a new purpose-built setting with two playrooms, an outdoor courtyard and a mezzanine level. Children also have access to an enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 23 September between 09:30 and 18:00 and Tuesday 24 September 2024 between 09:00 and 15:00. The inspection was carried out by three 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 and observed children using the service
- Contacted families and staff through Microsoft forms to gather their views
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and confident in the setting.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing care from adults that knew them very well.
- Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning.
- The service was led by a strong, approachable manager who involved staff in the development of the service.
- Staff felt valued and empowered to grow professionally and provided children with a happy and supportive environment.

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 found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing care from adults that knew them very well. Positive relationships formed meant children felt loved and happy, as they received the right support from adults when needed. One parent told us "The staff are so nurturing, and they care so much about the children."

We found as a team the staff were kind, caring and supportive of children's emotional security and wellbeing, for example, staff were aware of strategies to support children, giving them reassurance and space when required. As a result, children were safe, secure, and settled within the nursery environment.

Staff knew children very well and were enabling them to have positive experiences through using information shared from home and observations of children during play and learning experiences. This was supporting children's health, wellbeing, and safety needs. As a result, children were confident at approaching staff for support and involving them in their play and learning. One parent told us "Every time I go in the staff are engaged with the children, they are either dancing, reading or playing with them!"

A new personal planning format was in place and included an all about me sheet, which were regularly updated with parents. These documents held valuable information about children's likes, dislikes and care needs. We would encourage the management team to regularly review care plans to ensure child's needs are planned for in a meaningful way. This will further ensure that children receive the care that is right for them.

Children experienced a sociable, relaxed and unhurried mealtime with their friends and staff. Following the previous inspection the team had improved the mealtime experience to develop a routine that was sociable and that promoted choice and independence for children. Children in the 3-5 room had opportunities to develop their independence and life skills by self-serving meals and setting the table. 'Lunch time helpers' were proud of their role and received praise and encouragement from staff. Children's independence and life skills in the 2-3 room could be further enhanced by introducing more opportunities to self-serve and set up mealtimes. Food choices were nutritious and reflect current guidance. This meant that children were developing healthy eating habits.

Self-service water dispensers were available in the 3-5 playroom and outdoors to ensure children remained hydrated across the day. We discussed the importance of ensuring that this was also available to the younger children in the 2-3 playroom.

Policies and procedures were in place to support staff to safely administer any required medication. Staff were confident in the processes for individual children, for example, how to manage allergic reactions. We suggested that medication could be stored in the playrooms, in a space out of reach to the children. This will help ensure that medication, such as inhalers, are easily accessible when required.

Children experienced warm, nurturing and responsive support from staff during personal care which promoted their health and wellbeing. Children were treated with respect and dignity. For example, a mirror was provided for children after lunch to help them identify if they needed to use a face cloth. This meant that children were developing their independence skills.

Children who required a sleep were able to do so at a time that suited them. Since the last inspection, the service had reviewed the environment to ensure children had enough space while sleeping. As a result, children's safety, emotional security and wellbeing was very well supported.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and high quality planned play experiences. Children were excited to show us what they liked to do at nursery. One child asked us 'Would you like a tour?' This demonstrated to us that children had ownership of their nursery and felt confident in the setting.

Since the last inspection a new planning cycle had been introduced. Staff told us they had been very well supported by the early stages teacher and the wider management team when implementing these new processes. As a result, children experienced play and learning experiences that were responsive to their interests and stages of development.

Children were visibly happy, confident, and actively accessing all areas on offer. Children experienced rich and meaningful play opportunities to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. For example, experiments of mixing colours and quantities was engaging and giving children opportunities to work together and develop their curiosity and questioning. This meant that children were developing a range of skills. One parent told us "The range of activities are great and there are lots of fun things for the kids to do in and outside the building."

Younger children in the 2-3 room experienced opportunities to play with each other or on their own, if they wished. They particularly enjoyed using the playdough to roll, and imaginary play was developed through the home corner. As a result, children engaged in play and learning experiences that were enjoyable and relevant to them.

Effective use of questioning supported children to understand, self-regulate and extend their thinking, supporting their wellbeing, widening their skills, and consolidating their learning through play. This strengthened the emotional resilience of children and families through holistic and nurturing approaches to secure children's wellbeing, including their right to play. As a result, children were progressing well.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their own and wider communities. This was improving children's social and life skills through having the opportunity to use money to purchase products, make decisions and developing confidence. Children have taken part in a road safety campaign and posters are displayed throughout the local community. This will be continued with plans to work with the charity brake. As a result, children were gaining experiences and opportunities to support their local community. One parent told us "Visiting care homes etc is a great opportunity for the kids to build up a relationship in their community."

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

We saw improvements in the environment from the previous inspection. The team had developed the playrooms to provide a setting that was comfortable, homely and furnished to a high standard. The space was well ventilated. This made children feel welcomed in the setting.

Children had access to a variety of play spaces including two indoor playrooms, a sheltered courtyard and an enclosed outdoor garden. A mezzanine level was available at times, when weather permitted. The team had developed the space since the last inspection to provide physical play opportunities such as bikes, obstacle courses and goals with balls. As a result, children were developing independence as they freely moved between spaces.

The well planned indoor and outdoor spaces provided welcoming, interesting, and exciting areas for children to explore. Staff had developed and set up exciting play spaces that encouraged curiosity, imagination and creativity. Such as malleable, home corner, STEM, story corner, crafts, woodwork, small world and sensory play. This gave a strong message to children that they mattered.

The team continually review their learning environments to ensure they are fun exciting spaces for the children to play and learn. This was then monitored by the senior leadership team through environmental audits. We encouraged staff to continue to review the spaces, particularly 2-3 room as children continue to grow and develop. This will further ensure children continue to experience high quality environments to play and learn.

Free flow access between the indoors, the courtyard and enclosed outdoor garden further supported children's abilities to lead their play and learning. Children were confident and independent at putting on their outdoor clothing. As a result, children's health, wellbeing, and independence was being encouraged and supported.

Robust infection prevention and control practices were evident, across the setting. Children and staff were confident in good hand washing/hygiene. Staff also showed an understanding of infection prevention and control by supporting children with runny noses, messy hands and faces. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was available and utilised appropriately at the service. This meant that children were kept safe and healthy.

Risk assessments were in place and regularly reviewed. Mitigation measures were realistic and well considered. Effective arrangements were in place to monitor and maintain the setting, resources and equipment used. Children were supported, through conversations with staff, to understand potential risks in their space and how to keep themselves safe. Children also helped staff to do risk assessments in the morning, which included what clothes they would need to wear outside and in the courtyard. As a result, children were being kept safe.

Staff deployed themselves effectively across the outdoors to safely monitor and supervise children. They utilised walkie talkies to communicate effectively with each other to ensure children were accounted for at all times. The team were aware of the SIMOA campaign, which encourages services to act responsibly to safeguard, protect and support children's wellbeing.

How good is our leadership?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The passionate and enthusiastic team were fully committed to delivering high quality experiences for children and families. There was a shared vision which valued the provision of high-quality learning experiences. One parent told us, "We have had opportunities to guide decisions such as values of the centre."

The service was led by a strong, approachable manager who delegated responsibility appropriately to staff and involved them in the development of the service. Very good direction was provided to the team who were passionate and extremely focused on providing children and families with positive experiences. This meant that there was high staff morale which impacted positively on children's experiences.

An improvement plan was in place which was focused on outcomes for children. The manager enabled children and staff to play a key role in leading improvements in the setting. There was a strong focus on improving children's play and learning and parental involvement. This was implemented through a measured, planned approach, which was informed by current best practice guidance and research. Improvements were continually and thoroughly evaluated which included the views of children, their families, and other professionals. As a result, improvements in the setting were having a positive impact on outcomes for children. One parent told us, "I think there has been a massive improvement in the nursery over the last year. The communication has improved dramatically and you can tell the staff and management are always trying to make things better which is good."

Robust self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were leading to improved outcomes for children. Children, families and staff were regularly involved in giving feedback about the service and suggestions on how it could be improved. The team effectively used a range of methods to reflect on and improve their practice. As a result, children benefitted from a team who continually strived for excellence. One parent told us "There is a huge number of opportunities to be involved as a parent. My child's voice is clearly heard through their learning and the learning experience provided for them."

The aspirational goals of the team to provide high quality early learning and childcare meant that staff were reflective of the needs of families and children. As a result of the empowering ethos, created by the manager, the team supported each other in a true shared leadership approach. This showed us that there was a collaborative approach to improvement and as a result, the team provided a high-quality service to children and their families.

How good is our staff team?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: staff deployment

We observed the routine and pace of the day was led by children. Whilst there were planned group times, we found these provided meaningful opportunities for children to have fun and check in with their key workers during their busy day at nursery.

Staff were proactive and flexible in their deployment throughout the day, they followed the children between the playrooms, courtyard and outdoors. Staff were also supportive of each other and came together as a team to lend an extra set hand if needed. This helped to maintain effective supervision of the children. As a result, children benefitted from loving and caring relationships.

On the days of inspection, staff were deployed effectively throughout the playrooms, courtyard and enclosed outdoor garden, which supported high levels of interactions and promoted the wellbeing and safety of children. Staff were flexible in their deployment and happily moved areas in response to children's requests, such as outdoor play or when children required focused time with an adult. They positioned themselves appropriately for maximum supervision both indoors and outside. One parent told us "The staff are amazing. I feel my child is very safe and looked after well in the environment."

The team were warm, welcoming, and caring which led to a positive ethos throughout the nursery. Children were cared for by staff that were patient, nurturing and compassionate. Staff were passionate about delivering the best outcomes to children and their families. They were proud to tell us of all the improvements they had made since the last inspection and the positive impact this had on outcomes for children. As a result, children received high quality care, play and learning experiences.

Staff communicated effectively with each other throughout the days of inspection. Staff were enthusiastic and respectful to each other through their interactions. This created a positive environment that allowed the children to feel safe and secure, with adults who cared for them. We frequently saw staff sharing useful information and supporting each other across the day. Staff also utilised walkie talkies to aid communication across the outdoors, courtyard and playrooms. As a result, children experienced a very calm, nurturing environment.

An induction process in place, using the 'National Induction Resource' to guide them and new staff told us they met regularly with their mentors. Experienced staff told us they also received ongoing support for their own personal and professional development. This meant that staff felt valued and empowered to grow professionally and provided children with a happy and supportive environment.

Staff absences were well managed to provide consistent care and support. A clear policy was in place to maximise staff attendance. There was a positive ethos of attendance within the team, supported by the senior leadership team.

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

To meet children's health, welfare and safety needs, the manager should develop children's personal plans. This should include, but not be limited to, identifying and implementing appropriate strategies to meet children's needs, supporting progress and helping them to achieve their full potential.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.1).

This area for improvement was made on 6 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection personal plans have been streamlined and a new system has been put in place. The management team should continue to quality assure personal plans periodically to ensure strategies and actions are planned for and implemented.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to achieve their full potential the manager and staff should ensure appropriate levels of challenge in learning through child-led planning. This should include, but not be limited to, high quality observations, meaningful next steps and evidence of progression in learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 6 June 2023.

Action taken since then

A robust planning cycle, based on high quality observations, has been implemented and was continually monitored by the early stages teacher and principal teacher. For further information see quality indicator 1.3 Play and Learning, within the report.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children experience high quality facilities, management should review and improve the learning environment. This should include but not be limited to, providing cosy spaces to rest and relax and ensuring high quality resources are available to support natural curiosity, creativity and imagination.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.' (HSCS 2.27); and 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

This area for improvement was made on 6 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Improvements have been made to the learning environment since the last inspection. For further information see section 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities, within the report.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the provider should implement robust quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, covering key areas of practice. This should include, but not be limited to, monitoring children's personal plans, children's play and learning experiences, monitoring of staff practice, and evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 6 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Robust schedules of quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation were in place. For further information see section 3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To ensure positive outcomes for children, management should monitor and review the deployment and positioning of staff with a focus on staff responsibilities, engagement and effective supervision.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15). 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 6 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff were effectively deployed throughout the service, with management assurances in place to monitor. For further information see section 4.3 Staff deployment.

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?	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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