

# Newlands Kids Day Care of Children

Newlands Centre  
Romanno Bridge  
West Linton  
EH46 7BZ

Telephone: 01968 458 222

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
26 June 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Newlands & Kirkurd Playgroup  
Committee

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002018

**Service no:**  
CS2003009381

## About the service

Newlands Kids is registered to provide an early learning and child care service to a maximum of 52 children aged from two years to the end of primary school, at any one time. Of those 52, no more than 26 children are aged two years to not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided by Newlands & Kirkurd Playgroup Committee, a community led management committee. The nursery service have a designated entrance to the front of the building. There is a small kitchen area and toilets located off the main playroom. There is a secure garden of which the service have sole use. An extended garden area is home to the polytunnels where children visit regularly to grow and harvest their own fruit and vegetables. The service can also make use of a large field adjacent to the building. The out of school care operates from the dining hall within the adjoined community centre and primary school. They have use of the large sports hall adjoined to the dining hall with direct access to the outdoor space.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 28 June 2024 between 09:00 and 16:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for this inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- received written feedback from seven families
- spoke with staff and received written feedback from three staff members
- spoke with the manager and representatives of the provider
- observed practice, children's routines and experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children received comfort, warmth and kindness from staff who knew them well.
- The service was invested in the principle of seed to table and engaged children in learning about where their food came from.
- Staff could confidently talk about children's current interests and where these had been supported throughout the learning environment.
- Moving forward, the manager and staff should continue to develop and strengthen their use of language to extend children's ideas and promote curiosity.
- Examples of emergent literacy and numeracy was threaded throughout the environment both indoors and outdoors.
- Children's art work, displays and photographs promoted opportunities for conversations, as children reflected on their learning, in turn promoting their language and communication development.
- A culture of continuous improvement contributed to the quality experiences that children were having.
- The manager, staff and provider had worked hard to collectively build positive relationships that were underpinned with trust and respect.

## 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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care, play and learning

Children were supported through nurturing, quality interactions. Children received comfort, warmth and kindness from staff who knew them well. One parent told us, "Staff are very friendly and knowledgeable. Absolutely amazing with the children". Staff were being invited into children's play, where they shared stories and achievements as staff showed delight and interest as they listened attentively to children. Staff were down at child height and their positive body language and facial expressions supported children to be heard and participate. This fostered positive relationships and sent the message to children that they were being listened to and that they were important.

Children's transitions were recognised as important and were supported in a number of ways. For example, children were supported to prepare for transitions between play and daily routines, such as snack time and lunchtime. Whilst children transitioning to school had been supported through a variety of planned activities. This contributed to children's overall wellbeing and supported them to feel prepared and supported during this significant transition.

Personal plans within the early learning and childcare setting had been reviewed and updated as and when changes occurred. Staff could confidently talk about children's individual likes, dislikes and wishes. We asked the service to ensure that personal plans within the after school club were also reviewed and updated in line with legislation. Staff took steps to action this during the inspection. The service should continue to develop their personal planning approach to ensure it captures key information shared between families and staff. For example, information shared in relation to children's learning and development and agreed actions. This would strengthen the personal planning approach and support positive outcomes for children and families.

Mealtimes were a positive, calm and sociable experience for all. Children sat outdoors with staff and everyone ate together. The service were invested in the principle of seed to table and engaged children in learning about where their food came from. Fresh ingredients grown in the service were regularly harvested by the children and used as ingredients in the freshly prepared meals. Families were also involved as their local farm produce was part of the weekly menu, which children took pride in sharing. This experience helped children to develop skills and lifelong habits that would serve them into their future. The service should continue to develop further opportunities for children to benefit from being part of the preparation and serving at snack time. This would support children to build confidence and develop life skills through daily routines.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were engaged and focused in their play throughout the inspection. A variety of resources supported children to extend and follow their own ideas. For example, three children worked together using a variety of materials to connect a small chair to the outdoor sit on tractor. One child shared, "We need something on the back to pull along". The children used planning and design skills, whilst they experimented, tried and tested their idea and made adjustments to their design. They also used a variety of skills such as, problem solving, leadership and communication skills. This contributed to children's autonomy, confidence and over all wellbeing as they were supported to lead their own play and celebrate their creativity and imagination.

Staff supported children to revisit their learning through a variety of methods. For example, the use of electronic devices, floor books, which captured children's voices, displays around the room and conversations between children and staff. To promote discussion and children's independent thinking, which will extend their ideas and curiosity the manager and staff should use effective, open ended questioning. The service was receptive to this feedback. This would provide a deeper learning experience, whilst building confidence as children were supported to make suggestions and share their ideas that they know would be valued.

Staff had been supported by Scottish Borders Council to develop their observation and planning cycle. Staff could confidently talk about children's current interests and where these were reflected throughout the learning environment. For example, children had been exploring an interest in the life cycle of a frog. Staff were being responsive and had provided a variety of experiences to extend children's play and learning. Moving forward, the service should continue to strengthen the quality of observations and ensure that these capture the impact on the child and where appropriate, the relevant next steps in their learning. The service was receptive to this feedback. This would support children's overall care, play and learning experience.

The service had strong links with the local community and had taken part in a variety of events. Staff had developed positive relationships with local businesses which had created new opportunities for children within the setting. For example, the use of a field and the creation of a walkway to provide access to a local woodland area. The service made use of these frequently and offered children new play and learning opportunities. The staff had recently attended forest schools training and had plans to implement this on a weekly basis. This would offer children new learning opportunities in the great outdoors, while contributing to positive outcomes for all.

## How good is our setting?

## 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a positive, calm and relaxed atmosphere within a welcoming, clean and well organised environment. One parent told us, "This is a fantastic, safe, nurturing and educational nursery setting. My child has thrived since being here". Children's current interests had influenced the planning of play spaces and resources. This supported children to feel important and sent the message that they mattered. Moving forward, the afterschool club would benefit from further development. This would continue to ensure that all children benefit from a variety of resources, quality play spaces and experiences.

Emergent literacy and numeracy was threaded throughout the environment both indoors and outdoors. For example, through planting and growing opportunities in the polytunnels, the introduction of visuals, mark making opportunities throughout the environment and through the daily routines children experienced. Staff further enhanced these through the use of descriptive language and quality interactions with children. The service had plans to further develop the emergent numeracy focus through further training and development and the introduction of additional resources. This would continue to support children's learning and progression.

Children's photos, artwork and special items were displayed throughout the environment. This supported a sense of memorability within the space and supported children to feel safe, comfortable and important. This promoted opportunities for conversations as children reflected on their learning, in turn, supporting their language and communication development. The service should be mindful of how busy parts of the environment felt with visual text and print. The manager had already identified this and had planned to reduce this. This would reduce the level of visual noise within the space and further enhance the calm atmosphere that children experienced.

Children had direct access to outdoors and were freely moving between indoors and outdoors. The service had plans to further develop the resources and play spaces in the garden area. We highlighted areas of the wider outdoors spaces that would benefit from being tidied and regularly maintained. For example, the areas around the polytunnel and walkway to the pond area. The service took action during the inspection to address this. The service had plans to implement a parent rota to support with the upkeep of these areas. This would contribute to the positive environment that children experienced.

**How good is our leadership?****4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

**Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

A culture of continuous improvement contributed to the quality experiences that children were having. The provider, manager and staff team had all worked hard to bring about positive changes and improvements. This was evident through a variety of areas of practice. For example, improvements in resources, play spaces, interactions between children and staff, as well as children's routines. This contributed to the positive atmosphere that children, families and staff experienced.

The manager had implemented an ongoing monitoring and quality assurance system. This was a working document that had been continually evaluated and adjusted to reflect the priorities within the service. Staff were fully involved in the ongoing improvements within the service. The manager had recently developed this further to include additional quality assurance strands that reflected the work of the administrator. This provided a clearer overview of the ongoing quality assurance systems within the service. Moving forward, the service should implement the same level of improvement focus within the after school club. This would strengthen the culture of continuous improvement that had been implemented and develop consistency across the service.

The manager had worked in partnership with Scottish Borders Council to connect with partner services. This had given the opportunity to share practice, implement valuable peer support and visit other early years settings. Looking ahead, the service had plans to further develop this partnership working, with staff also having the opportunity to visit other early years settings. This would contribute to building positive working relationships that would in turn enhance outcomes for all.

The manager had dedicated a significant amount of time supporting the staff team. Staff shared how valued they felt and how significant this support had been. Staff reported an increase in confidence and knowledge in their practice. As a result, staff reported how happy and content they were at their work. This contributed to the positive and respectful atmosphere that children experienced.

Families views were valued and were recognised as an important part of the ongoing improvements within the service. Through a variety of methods such as, daily conversations, parents committee, newsletters and parental questionnaires. The service should continue to look at new and creative ways to involve children within the ongoing improvements across the service. We directed the service to the Scottish Government document, 'Voice of the Infant: best practice guidelines and infant pledge' (2023). The manager was receptive to this feedback. The principles that underpin this guidance would support staff to further develop and promote participation for all children.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The service had experienced staffing changes since our last inspection. The manager, provider and staff team had worked hard to collectively build positive relationships that were underpinned with trust and respect. This was evident in the interactions between staff, which modelled respect and kindness. This promoted the service's values and contributed to the positive atmosphere.

Staff interactions with children were kind, caring and genuine. One parent told us, "The relationship with the staff and children is special. They know the children so well and I feel confident dropping my children off". Staff knew children well and could confidently talk about them as individuals. Staff worked well together and recognised the importance of effective communication across the team. A variety of communication methods were used to ensure staff were kept up to date with key information. For example, a private social media group chat, morning daily huddles, team meetings and protected time as a team once a week. This contributed to positive outcomes for all.

Staff within the nursery were flexible and responsive and made effective deployment decisions based on the needs of the children and the routines across the day. For example, staff communicated if a task was going to take them away from children and this was responded to immediately. Moving forward, the service should improve staff deployment decisions within the after school club. For example, staff were being deployed to the after school club with very little time. As a result, staff had a limited amount of time to participate in planning or meaningful reflective discussions. This had an impact on the variety of resources available to children and the quality of the play spaces. The service was receptive to this feedback and recognised that this was an area of practice that should be strengthened. This would promote consistency across the service and continue to support all children to have quality care, play and learning experiences.

## 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 ensure children experience flexible daily routines that are delivered with kindness and compassion, the provider should ensure the pace of the day and daily routines are responsive to the needs of individual children. Daily routines should be reviewed and developed so they do not restrict children's play and learning opportunities.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

**This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Staff had worked hard to develop daily routines that were delivered with kindness and compassion. Staff had participated in meaningful reflective discussions and used this information to develop routines that reflected children's pace of learning and individual needs. For example, adapting the story time, and offering this as smaller groups to support the younger children within the space. As a result, children were engaged as they listened to their story and participated through sharing their views and ideas.

Staff also responded throughout the day to the way in which children presented. For example, recognising that children wanted to run and climb, staff responded by inviting children out to the larger field space. This contributed to children feeling heard and them being able to influence their care, play and learning.

Daily routines such as mealtimes and gather times were calm, relaxed and supported by staff that knew the children well. Predictability and helping children to know what was happening next was supported through simple routines such as, the introduction of a musical instrument. For example, this was sounded to let children know that they had five more minutes to finish their play, before snack time was being served. Children were then able to make the choice to continue their play or join the rolling snack time. This was clearly embedded in practice as a child said out loud "oh five more minutes". This supported children to have a sense of security and control over their environment.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children experience continuity in their care, play and learning, the provider should ensure improvements are made to communication with families. Families should be fully informed about their children's progress and achievement, and what they can do to support it. Developing high quality feedback would enable families to feel valued and be fully involved in their child's care, play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meet my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2024.**

### Action taken since then

The service had been working hard to develop their ongoing communication with families. Through a variety of methods families were kept up to date with their child's care, play, learning and progression. For example, electronic journals, parent consultations, daily verbal feedback and closed social media platform. One parent told us, "There is constant updates on the journals, even with amazing photos. Also get updates daily from staff how my child is doing". This helped families to be involved in their child's care, play and learning, which contributed to positive outcomes for all.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure the importance of relationships between staff and children are recognised and remain at the heart of practice, the provider should ensure that families are kept informed of any staffing changes. This would improve communication, help parents and children feel more at ease with any changes and will allow relationships and trust to be built between staff, parents and children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Children experienced staff that were kind, caring and had a genuine warmth. Staff were down at child height and their positive body language, tone of voice and facial expressions sent the message to children that they were important and that they were being listened to. The service communicated staffing changes with families through a variety of methods. For example, through verbal introductions, newsletters, emails and the parent committee. This contributed to families feeling valued and informed on key changes that would impact on their child's care, play and learning.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

### Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure children's safety and wellbeing needs are not compromised, the provider should ensure that robust systems are in place for recording, and following up on, requested maintenance work.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 5.17: My environment is secure and safe. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 5.17: My environment is secure and safe.

**This area for improvement was made on 28 February 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

The service had improved their procedures for recording and following up on maintenance requests. A positive working relationship between the service and the community centre management team, meant that staff worked collaboratively to resolve any maintenance issues in a supportive and timely manner. For maintenance work that required more detailed planning, this had been scheduled to take place over the summer holidays when the service was closed to children and families. For example, the addition of a safety case over the door release buttons. Whilst waiting for maintenance work to be completed, the service had proactively updated risk assessments to ensure that they were considering the risk level for children and taking appropriate action. This contributed to children's overall health, safety and wellbeing.

**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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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