Heathfield Early Years Centre
Day Care of Children

Heathfield Road
Ayr
KA8 9DR

Telephone: 01292 612 123

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 November 2024

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003014015

About the service

Heathfield Early Years Centre is provided by South Ayrshire Council. The early learning and childcare service is located within Heathfield Primary School in Ayr.

The service is currently registered to provide places for 54 children aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full-time.

The children have access to one playroom, a large enclosed outdoor play space and appropriate toilet facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 and 8 November 2024 between 08:45 and 15:00. 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 previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with the manager
- spoke with 12 members of staff
- observed staff practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received feedback from five parents/carers.

Key messages

- Children were happy, settled and engaging with resources in the environment available to them.
- Good, nurturing relationships with parents and children were evident.
- Children's rights were being acknowledged and respected.
- Staff and management were on a journey with an observation, planning and evaluation cycle and this should continue to be developed and embedded to ensure experiences and outcomes for children are of high quality.
- Changes in management were at an early stage of embedding, and capacity for improvement was evident.
- The service would benefit from resources being enhanced to support, sustain and extend children's interests.

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 and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm and nurturing in their approach and interactions with children. Good relationships between staff and families supported children to feel welcome and secure. One parent commented: "Staff are all very friendly and approachable."

Personal care routines for children were carried out sensitively and took account of children's rights. Staff were respectful of children's wishes, for example some staff asked children if they could support them in blowing their nose and could they join children in their play. As result, children felt valued and respected.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported by staff's knowledge of their emotional, health and wellbeing needs. Personal plans were in place, however some lacked detail and strategies on how staff planned to support children. We discussed this with the management team who agreed to monitor this moving forward. Where children had an identified additional support need, staff were proactive in working collaboratively with other agencies, for example speech and language therapists. As a result, children received care and support that was right for them at the right time.

Medication processes were in place. However, further development of medication auditing systems was needed, for example, staff should ensure that the quantity of medication to be administered matches the manufacturing guidance, unless further instruction from a medical professional. This will continue to support staff to ensure medication is administered safely.

Information was shared regularly with parents through the use of online learning journals, newsletters and daily discussions. One parent told us: "Staff are always there to welcome my child in the morning and I get a handover at the end of the day with any important information I need or just a general how my child has been." Whilst good communication supported most parents to be involved in their child's time at the service, we asked the management team to ensure all staff demonstrated a consistent approach when sharing information with parents at key times, for example drop off and collection. This will ensure all parents feel involved and informed about their child's experience at the service.

Mealtimes were a relaxed, sociable experience where children sat with staff and their peers. We asked staff to consider the length of time children waited for their lunch after sitting at the table. Staff worked together to create a warm atmosphere for children. Opportunities for children to be included and learn important life skills were encouraged, for example serving and clearing away their crockery. We discussed with the management team, ways in which the experience could be further enhanced to support a quality mealtime for all children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Most children were happy and having fun with their peers. During our visits, children enjoyed taking part in a range of activities, for example, role play in the home corner, water play and large construction play.

There were some opportunities for children to engage in experiences to support development of their skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, books were available in many of the play spaces for children and printed numbers and environment print supported some children in number and letter recognition. We discussed with the management team how these could be enhanced to further support children in their play.

There were some opportunities for children to lead their own play, however, we noted that some experiences on offer were adult initiated and directed. Staff missed opportunities to scaffold and extend children's play. For example, a dressing table was set in the home corner, however limited resources were available to children, impacting on children's engagement in this area. To support staff, we discussed with the management team how the planning, observation and evaluation cycle could be refined to better reflect children's individual interests and next steps. This will support staff in facilitating more open-ended experiences that can be extended to enrich children's play and learning.

Children's learning was supported by good links within their local community. Children had regular opportunities to visit the local park and beach. They had also developed good relationships with the local care home and visited residents regularly.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Spaces for children were bright with plenty of natural light and were well-ventilated. Furniture for children was appropriately sized and good quality. Children's art work and comments were displayed throughout the service. This gave the message to children that they mattered and that their voice and views were important. One parent commented: "The environment is inviting and it always feels calm and enjoyable when entering, staff are always aware where each child is and welcomes parents by name."

Spaces for children and resources both indoors and outdoors were mostly well-maintained. Most children engaged well with the resources available, however, we asked that staff improved monitoring of areas at set up and replenish times to ensure areas were well-stocked and children have regular access to quality resources and materials. Whilst a variety of resources were available, many of these were stored away in a resource cupboard. We advised the management team that children would further benefit from staff rotating resources indoors and outdoors as this will continue to enhance their play and learning.

Free flow access to an enclosed outdoor play area supported children in choosing where they wished to play and provided opportunities for more physical and energetic play. Children enjoyed participating in a variety of experiences including making their own toast around the firepit and using bikes and scooters. This meant children's right to choose was respected and their health and wellbeing supported by regular access to fresh air and exercise.

Infection prevention and control procedures should be further improved to ensure children experience a clean and safe environment. For example, some spaces outdoors for children to rest and relax were cluttered with leaves and water available for children's play outdoors appeared to be unchanged from the previous day. We raised this with staff and this was dealt with immediately. Staff and children participated in good hand hygiene and children were encouraged to wash hands at key times of the day including before meals and after returning from outdoor play.

Risk assessment supported children to be cared for safely. We heard good conversations between some staff and children, where children were discussing what felt 'safe' and 'unsafe' when using and building with materials, for example, wooden blocks. As a result, children had the opportunity to develop their skills in assessing and managing their own risk.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and leadership are led well

The management and staff team engaged well during the inspection process and were open to ideas and suggestions we made over the course of our visit. It was evident that the management team were passionate about providing a quality service for children and families and were proactive in making improvements. The service was in the process of updating their current vision, values and aims to ensure they were reflective of the needs and aspirations of the children and families that currently attend.

The management team were involved in the daily life and had a good oversight of aspects of the service. Due to the new management team in place, some self evaluation and quality assurance processes were in the early stages of development. We identified some gaps and discussed with the management team how a more formal process would support a robust system that led to sustained improvements

An improvement plan was in place for the whole school, however it was not fully reflective of the current priorities and needs within the early years class. We discussed with the management team, how a more detailed plan, specifically for the early years class would support staff in planning and leading improvements.

Relationships between staff and families were valued and most parents felt they had the opportunity to be meaningfully involved in the service. One parent told us: "Anytime that I have asked for a catch up with any of the staff they are always more than happy to accommodate and always follow up following our discussion. This shows great professionalism but also great care and dedication to the needs of each child within the centre." The staff team facilitated a number of ways for parents and children to be involved, for example providing feedback on what was working well within the service and areas that could improve. Management and staff were responsive to this and provided written responses via a 'you said, we did' board in the lobby.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The management and staff team had worked together to create a warm and nurturing environment for children and families. One parent commented: "The staff are very friendly, approachable and passionate about what they do. The children are clearly very happy in their care. The learning opportunities offered by the setting are high quality and varied and promote creativity and interest in the children. My child is happy and settled in the EYC [early years centre] and that is a testament to the hard work of the staff and their key workers."

Staff were keen to develop their professional practice, knowledge and skills and had engaged in a variety of continuous professional development opportunities. Management had taken into account staff preference, skills and levels of experiences when allocating staff to play rooms. As a result, staff felt included and valued in their work environment and children benefited from being cared for by staff who understood their learning, health and wellbeing needs.

Staff were deployed appropriately throughout the service which ensured children were safe and cared for. Staff communicated well with each other and were courteous and respectful in their interactions with each other. The management team were available to support during periods of absence and to allow staff to have a break. One member of staff commented: "Staff are deployed well and all staff work extremely hard for the best outcomes for our children." This meant children experienced continuity of care throughout their time in the service.

Staff told us they felt both personally and professionally supported by the management team. Regular meetings with the management provided staff with the opportunity to discuss their progression and celebrate achievements. One member of staff told us: "I am fully supported by my Head Teacher and the EYC team. I know I can ask all members of the team for support and guidance in a respected and nurturing way. Leadership at all levels allows individuals to thrive. I can have open and honest dialogue with my Head Teacher and feel I am listened to and valued."

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?	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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.