Brucehill ELCC
Day Care of Children

Ardoch Crescent
Brucehill
Dumbarton
G82 4EN

Telephone: 01389 762 840

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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Service provided by:
West Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
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About the service

Brucehill ELCC is provided by West Dunbartonshire Council and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 80 children aged 3 years to primary school age. At the time of inspection these numbers had been reduced to 56 children.

Brucehill ELCC is based within standalone premises comprising of two large playrooms, a snack/lunch room, family room, changing facilities and children's toilets. There is a large adjoining outdoor area to offer children opportunities for outdoor play and learning. At the time of inspection, the garden area was being upgraded.

The service is based in Dumbarton in West Dunbartonshire and is easily accessible by foot and car and is near local bus routes. There are two local primary schools within walking distance of the setting.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 23 May and Wednesday 24 May 2023. 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 20 children using the service and seven of their families
- spoke with 11 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff were nurturing and responsive to children's needs.
- Children felt safe, confident and secure within the setting.
- Staff knew children and their families very well.
- We observed high levels of engagement in child-led play.
- Forest school sessions were well planned and resourced to offer children valuable opportunities to explore, experience and learn about nature.
- The leadership team worked well with staff to make improvements to the service.
- An increased focused on monitoring children's engagement, staff supervision of children and interactions, would identify where staff needed more support and confidence to meet all children's needs across the day.
- Staff had a good understanding of how children learn and develop and used their knowledge well to support children in their learning.

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?	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? 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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We observed happy, well-cared for children who enjoyed their time at Brucehill ELCC. Families were confident that staff were nurturing and responsive to their children's needs.

Children and their families received a personal welcome each morning on arrival. Some parents/carers chose to take their children directly into the setting and others passed their children to staff at the door. Children were familiar with the arrival routine and most proceeded immediately to their group table where they were greeted warmly by their keyworkers with hugs and friendly chat about their time at home. We could see that children felt safe, confident and secure within the setting. One parent commented: "I love it when maybe my child isn't too keen to go in some mornings that staff are there to help and are very gentle and nice."

Staff were committed to providing warmth and nurturing care to children. They knew children very well as individuals and were responsive to their needs. Each child had a Being Me folder which contained a range of information about their health, welfare and care needs. Personal plans and 'all about me' booklets were completed in partnership with families and furnished staff with the information they needed to offer a holistic approach to nurturing and supporting children's wellbeing needs. Good arrangements were in place to review this information to ensure it always reflected children's most current needs. Staff worked closely with families to ensure a mutual exchange of information about children. Parents agreed, with one saying: "Feel like they know our children really well and highlight any concerns as well as positive feedback. Our children just love going to nursery which is a true reflection of how wonderful the place is."

Families agreed that staff knew their children very well. Comments included: "The staff all know the children really well and know the needs of each child. They are more than happy to help/give advice too."

Comprehensive procedures were in place to help staff meet the needs of those children requiring additional support. The leadership team worked in partnership with families and external agencies to ensure these children received targeted support. Staff were sensitive to the needs of these children and were keen to provide the right support at the right time for the child. A parent told us: "My child requires additional support, I was very nervous about sending them to nursery because of this. Brucehill ELCC has been the best decision I made for my child. They are very well looked after, their needs are always met and staff are all fully aware of their needs and what it takes to keep them safe and happy at all times. I am always kept up to date about all aspects of my child at nursery and have a great relationship with all of the staff."

Staff were familiar with individual strategies in place to support children to manage their emotions and behaviours and keep them safe. Children had been reading The Colour Monster story to understand and explore their emotions. During our visit, we spoke with a child who was playing with the colour monster figures. The child told us about the emotions each monster represented and said, "I feel happy."

Appropriate resources and spaces had been developed to ensure children had options to sleep. And, if they no longer required a sleep, to be able to engage in quiet and restful play when it suited their needs.

A separate room had been developed to provide snack on a rolling basis and separate lunch sittings. The room was well-organised to support children to gain independence skills and make healthy choices. Children ate well at lunchtime. They had opportunities to serve themselves and clear their dishes away. Although staff sat with children chatting sociably, during our visit, opportunities for role modelling were missed as they did not eat lunch with the children. While the manager advised that staff did regularly eat with the children, we noted that extra food was not delivered to provide lunches for staff as part of the daily allocation. We noted that the service provider was keen to rectify this and was negotiating the provision of additional servings with the caterers. We highlighted the need for some foods to be prepared and served in accordance with best practice guidance and were advised that this had been raised with the catering provider.

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure all staff knew about children's dietary and health needs. Procedures for the safe storage and administration of medication were in place. We highlighted the need to amend the medication consent form to ensure staff knew parents had previously administered the first dose of any medication to children at home safely. Staff reviewed medication regularly but we noted that some medication had expired and not been replaced. This was rectified during our visit.

We found that there were effective systems in place to control and prevent the spread of infection within the service to protect staff and children. Although nappy changing facilities complied with best practice guidance; the head of centre agreed these would be enhanced with some more interesting decoration. While children and staff washed their hands regularly, children would benefit from additional staff supervision to ensure this was done in line with best practice guidance. At times, staff could have done more to encourage and assist children to wipe their noses and learn good hygiene practices.

1.3 Play and learning

From the moment they arrived, children were keen to engage with staff, their peers and the resources provided. Most children were focused and took an active role in leading their own learning. We observed high levels of engagement in child-led play with children having fun whilst building self-esteem and confidence, developing problem-solving skills and learning to co-operate and share with their peers. One parent commented, "Children are taught how to be independent, confident individuals by all staff in the nursery setting."

Adult-led activities were well planned and resourced to guide children through the learning experience. We observed one group enjoying a fun activity about oral hygiene. Children were engaged and concentrated well to perform tasks; they listened well to the story and took turns to make suggestions about the characters.

Children were closely supervised to ensure safety while learning to use real tools to create animals from wood and branches, and using knives to develop their cutting skills to make fruit salad. Children demonstrated great focus and concentration during these activities, taking their responsibilities very seriously and enjoying the praise and encouragement they received.

Children's individual Being Me folders contained high quality observations of the progress they were making in their learning and development. We could see where next steps were identified and how these were taken forward to reach milestones. The early stages teacher (EST) and staff worked in partnership to ensure that children were making very good progress in literacy and numeracy. The EST knew the children well and worked closely with staff and children to deliver and promote provocations and activities to ensure children were reaching their potential in literacy and numeracy. The baseline toolkit was used effectively to track

children's individual progress highlighting where they were secure in their knowledge and where next steps for learning were identified. Children were being well-supported in their transition to primary school.

Floor books and wall displays were being used well to showcase children's progress and demonstrate the high value staff placed on children's contributions to their own learning. They contained examples of children's work, photographs, children's comments and own mark making skills, which showed the variety and depth of learning taking place across the curriculum.

Throughout our visit, staff recognised, supported and took pleasure in children's skills and achievements, consistently offering praise and encouragement to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff demonstrated effective use of questioning to extend children's thinking, widen their skills and consolidate their learning. Interactions were pitched at the appropriate level for children. Parents told us they were happy with the progress their children were making within the setting. A parent commented, "Friendly staff, excellent with the kids, good learning programmes."

Overall, staff positioned themselves well to play and talk with children, recognising the importance of being at child level. For example, staff sat on the floor with children for group time, sat at children's tables at registration time and when encouraging creativity during messy play.

Families told us how much they valued children's learning experiences within the local community, in particular at forest school. Their comments included: "I think the Forest School is a fantastic opportunity for the children to participate in. So much effort goes into its organisation, but is all worth it as the children get so much from it. If only it was longer than 1 day for 6 weeks." The forest school lead practitioner was enthusiastic and committed to providing quality outdoor learning in a local wooded area. Each session was well-planned and resourced to offer children opportunities to explore, experience and learn about nature.

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.

Brucehill ELCC was based within a detached purpose-built centre where children accessed two large playrooms, a smaller snack/lunch room, cloakroom, appropriate toilets and a changing area. There was free flow access to an enclosed large outdoor play area, which was being upgraded at the time of inspection. The setting was comfortable, furnished to a good standard and welcoming, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. There were effective arrangements in place to ensure the maintenance of the premises but redecoration of some areas would reinforce the strong message to children and their families that they matter. Families agreed that the setting was safe and clean, comments included: "Staff are all lovely and a lovely/clean establishment". Despite the investment put in to improving the setting, one parent felt that there was room for further improvement, commenting: "Although the unit is well-maintained, I feel that an internal upgrade would benefit both the staff and children. There are some areas that could be upgraded to be improved."

Appropriate door entry systems had been installed and maintained to ensure children were safe. We found that children could freely explore indoors and outdoors safely. Comprehensive risk assessments were in place to identify and control any hazards. We noted that additional shelving had been ordered to allow children to store their completed models more safely, especially when these were too large for their individual trays.

From our discussions, we found that staff understood their responsibilities to keep children safe. Staff were keen to help children to understand the need to keep themselves safe but also recognised the benefits children derived from setting their own safety limits and participating in risky play. Staff told us how at forest school sessions children confidently discussed risks and boundaries identified to keep them safe, gradually increasing these boundaries weekly as their confidence developed.

The indoor learning environment was rich in quality play resources, which were stored effectively at child-height to encourage children to make choices. The rainbow room was a calm playroom, with soft lighting and soft music offering children a tranquil place to play. The home corner had recently been refurbished to a high standard offering lots of interesting materials to provide children with opportunities for role play and imaginative play. Parents commented "The nursery is beautifully decorated and very welcoming. I love how families are encouraged to add to this. For example in the 'home corner' family portraits are displayed for those who were willing to participate." The main play area was well-defined to offer children opportunities to explore science and technology and construction. The creative area was very popular during our inspection with children exploring their imaginations and creativity with playdough, paints and model making. Children enjoyed their sensory experiences in the sand and water areas.

Children were able to access outdoor play independently. Their outdoor clothes and boots were easily accessible. Due to the ongoing work to renovate the large garden, children were limited to two smaller areas during our visit. While children did enjoy their time outside, we did feel there was a tendency for the areas to get quite busy. Children were keen to return to the larger garden and had been consulted on its development. We noted that the plans would allow children to access a wide range of high quality learning resources. Parents agreed that the garden renovation would enhance their children's experience, commenting: "The garden is being renovated which is amazing" and "It's great to see the outside play area get a face lift which the children will definitely benefit from."

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.

Since the last inspection, the leadership team had changed and had worked well with staff to make improvements to the service. Parents commented: "Management have been fantastic at welcoming our children when they started nursery and they continue to be warm and nurturing with the children whilst providing key leadership" and "The manager and staff do all they can to ensure the children are well cared for and have everything they need."

Planning for improvement was becoming embedded into practice, with high value placed on the contribution of staff, children and their families in highlighting what worked well and what could be better. Staff told us they felt their views and opinions were valued and respected in relation to improvements in the setting. The team used the quality indicator framework How good is our early learning and childcare? to focus on specific areas for improvement at regular meetings. We could see from the records of these discussions that staff were able to recognise and identify strengths and areas of good practice and to highlight where development would improve outcomes for children and their families.

Children had recently been asked for their views on the garden renovation and were consulted informally about their daily learning. Families were regularly asked for comments through Class Dojo and questionnaires. A recent family questionnaire generated very positive feedback about communication between families and the setting. Parents' comments included: "Communication from management is

excellent and I feel more than comfortable approaching the nursery with any queries". Most parents told us they were fully involved and informed about their children's learning and development. But some commented "More advance notice of events to give busy parents time to prepare", "More feedback via dojo or face to face", "More communication about learning" and "Although we get updates on dojo I would personally like more pictures." We shared these comments with the leadership team and noted that current methods of communication were under review.

The service improvement plan was underpinned by relevant local and national guidance and legislative frameworks and was a useful tool for improvement, outlining clear points for action, responsibilities and timescales. The priorities were clear, realistic and achievable and should lead to sustained improvement in outcomes for children and families.

Delegated leadership arrangements were in place to encourage staff to take on champion roles to lead and promote best practice in designated areas. We spoke with staff about these roles and found that they were enthusiastic and committed to improving outcomes for children and their families in their 'specialist' area.

The leadership team had developed a calendar for monitoring quality across the setting. Often this was carried out informally when the team was augmenting adult to child ratios at specific times of day. We discussed the need for more focused monitoring on children's engagement, staff supervision of children and interactions, which would identify where staff needed more support and confidence to meet all children's needs across the day.

Appropriate arrangements were in place to record details of any accidents and incidents occurring and to pass this information on to families. Some staff were trained in first aid to ensure they had the skills and confidence to react to any accidents of health issues arising. Accident and incident reports were audited monthly to ensure patterns and hazards could be identified and addressed promptly.

How good is our staff team? 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.

The service provider recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed during the day as essential to the wellbeing of children in the service. To ensure children were well-supported the numbers of children within the setting had been reduced to provide a higher adult to child ratio.

Staff understood the importance of compliance with prescribed adult to child ratios indoors and outdoors to keep children safe and ensure high quality outcomes, but told us that that there were times when they felt unable to meet all children's needs to the high standard they strived to offer. During our visit, we saw that staff worked hard to support all children but we agreed that, on occasion, staff missed opportunities to assess risk effectively. We discussed this in depth with the leadership team and requested that a plan be put in place to ensure effective supervision and positive engagement with children across the day (see area for improvement 1).

The staff team was educated to a high level with many staff completing further education to enhance and underpin their existing qualifications, skills and experience. They told us they had regular access to high quality development sessions in a range of topics to enhance their practice and improve outcomes for children. Staff had a good understanding of how children learn and develop and used their knowledge well

to support children in their learning. They knew children very well as individuals and were attuned to their needs across the day.

Families agreed that staff knew their children well, including what they liked and what was important for their care, telling us: "The whole team are excellent, knowledgeable and all are aware of the children and needs", "I feel that all staff within the setting are well trained and am aware that some attend college to further their knowledge and skills to ensure the children are cared for to the best of their abilities" and "The staff are caring, compassionate and responsive to needs. They are knowledgeable in early years learning and offer numerous opportunities for children to learn and develop. I am delighted with the level of service my child receives."

Keyworking arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day. This ensured positive transitions for children and good communication with families. Families commented positively about the keyworking arrangements but told us that they appreciated that all staff knew their children. One person commented, "The staff are all lovely and very nurturing. Although there are set groups within the nursery, the staff really take the time to get to know each and every child regardless of their group." The leadership team covered most temporary absences themselves, which offered consistency to children and ensured families always knew staff supporting their children.

Throughout our visit, we observed a staff team who treated children with warmth and respect. Children had formed close attachments with their keyworkers and other members of staff, which showed us they felt loved and secure in the setting. Children and staff chatted together confidently throughout our visit. Staff responded considerately and patiently to children's needs, conversations and questions. Interactions were fun, enabling and empowering and helped children to feel secure within the setting.

Areas for improvement

1. To support staff and children's wellbeing and safety, the provider should develop a plan to:

(a) ensure effective deployment and staffing levels take account of the complexity of individual children's needs in addition to the wider group and circumstances across the day

(b) ensure staff understand the importance of positioning themselves to promote effective supervision of children indoors and outdoors

(c) support staff to understand the extent of their roles in assessing and managing risk.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14).

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

The head of centre should ensure that medication is regularly reviewed with parents; medication is returned when a child leaves the service; and permission forms are completed for each medication that is stored in the service. This is line with the service's medication policy and best practice. National Care Standards, early education and childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 4 - Engaging with children.

This area for improvement was made on 11 April 2017.

Action taken since then

Revised procedures had been implemented for the administration of medication to children after the last inspection. We were satisfied with the actions taken at that time. However, we did raise some issues with medication at this inspection (see How good is our care, play and learning?)

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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