Auchnacraig ELCC
Day Care of Children

Faifley Road
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 March 2023

Service provided by:
West Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003383

Service no:
CS2003014725

About the service

Auchnacraig Early Learning and Childcare Centre is provided by West Dunbartonshire Council.
The service is based in standalone accommodation within the grounds of Edinbarnet Primary School in Faifley, Clydebank.

The service provides early learning and childcare in two wings of the building; one for children attending term time and one for children attending all year. Children have access to a large, secure outdoor area split over two levels.

It is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 126 children aged three years to those not yet of primary school age at any one time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 and 9 March 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 registration information, intelligence gathered and information submitted by the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children using the service
- sent out a family questionnaire and received three responses
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- We observed children having lots of fun and enjoying the resources and experiences available for play and learning.
- Staff knew children extremely well and built positive, caring relationships with families.
- The environment was bright, spacious, furnished to a very high standard, and designed to maximise children's opportunity for play and learning.
- Family engagement was strongly encouraged and families valued and welcomed these opportunities.
- Quality assurance including self-evaluation and improvement planning was in place and supported improved outcomes for children and families.
- We did observe occasions where deployment of staff and communication could be improved to support the wellbeing of children.

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. We evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

We saw staff warmly welcome children and families into the nursery environment, they were greeted with kind words, cuddles and welcoming gestures. One parent said, "My child is always welcomed with a smile and good morning from all staff." This visible and encouraging approach builds positive relationships between children, families and staff, making children feel safe and secure in the nursery environment.

Staff worked closely with families and children to make their first visits from home to nursery child-centred, nurturing and responsive. Children were welcomed into the service during planned settling-in visits, these helped children become familiar with staff and their new surroundings. Effective information sharing between families and nursery, the use of care plans and 'all about me' booklets enabled staff to consider how best to support each child, meet their needs and family preferences. One staff member said, "We can identify the care needs and choices for all children before they start, we then review this with parents regularly to update any changes." This 'working together' approach maintains continuity and consistency of care between home and nursery.

Lunch was a sociable experience, children and staff sat together, chatted and had a relaxed and unhurried mealtime. We observed children enjoying opportunities to be independent, this included serving themselves and clearing their dishes away. Where children needed additional support, staff were caring, patient and supportive offering lots of cuddles and encouragement. Staff told us mealtimes provided time for them to build closer relationships and attachments with children.

The layout of the setting allowed children to have 'snack' in a separate room. The space offered opportunities to make bread and participate in a 'cooking club.' A range of resources were available including a bread maker, utensils, cookery books and ingredients. Children excitedly told us they made their bread and had it for a snack! These rich opportunities allow children to explore different food types, develop numeracy/literacy skills and have fun.

Children's folio recorded their achievements, 'wow' moments outlined the next steps in their learning journey. Children could easily access their folders and revisit their drawings, photographs and mark-making. We observed one child proudly open their journal and point to pictures of a tower they had built. This approach builds children's self-esteem, confidence and supports continuous learning. Families also told us they received regular updates via online apps, meetings and conversations at drop-off and pick-up. One parent said, "Through class dojo the staff let us know what the children will be learning for the week and ideas for us to do at home to support my child."

We reviewed medication administration and found appropriate procedures were in place to safeguard children. We did discuss with the staff team some small areas for improvement in the auditing process.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and Learning

We observed children having lots of fun and leading their play. The layout of the setting and availability of intelligent resources (resources which stimulate open-ended play; wood, material, coloured bottles and tubes) promoted children's curiosity, imagination and creativity. Floor books and chat books captured and showcased children's learning journeys within the setting and recorded their ideas, thought, plans and outcomes.

Staff's planning approaches to play and learning reflected children's interests. Careful observations, effective use of questioning and skilled interactions enabled staff to meaningfully extend children's play to learning. We observed 'circle time' where children happily discussed their interests and staff outlined on 'today I am going to' picture boards, activities which were available in each room; creative arts, extremely messy play, construction and block play. This approach allowed children to make informed choices about their play and learning.

The daily routine and pace of the day were monitored to ensure it was responsive to children's needs. Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced with visits to the local community. They could choose to participate in local outings to the library, local venues and gardens.

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. We evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high-quality facilities

The environment was bright, spacious, furnished to a very high standard, and designed to maximise children's opportunity for play and learning. Children started their nursery day in their 'base room;' these were welcoming spaces where children could play and learn with support from caring and kind staff. This gives children a strong message that they matter and belong.

Children had ample space for their needs, we observed them move freely through connecting rooms to their large outdoor environment. Children were comfortable within the setting, they selected resources easily, adapted play spaces and made decisions on how resources could be used. This included using guttering to transport water between units; children confidently adapted their resources to reflect their imaginative play.

Sensory spaces were furnished to meet the wellbeing needs of children. Staff told us they were created to offer children areas where they could relax, rest, explore and play in a calming environment. Rich and varied resources reflected children's developmental needs, they included contrasting textures; wooden and metal objects and sensory lighting.

The outdoor environment offered children a range of equipment to stimulate physical challenge and explorative play. Resources included tyres, bricks and pallets, there were also areas for planting and growing. At the time of the inspection children and staff were in the process of redesigning and developing the outdoor environment to create exciting spaces that stimulate curiosity and a sense of wonder.

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. We evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The senior leadership team; head of centre, depute and lead practitioner took a whole team approach to improve outcomes for children and families. Professional discussion, regular meetings and reviews promoted a shared vision which helped all staff know what was important for the setting. Staff told us they felt valued, supported and they worked well together to provide the best care and support for children and families.

Quality assurance including self-evaluation and improvement planning was in place. These outlined key priorities of the service; they included strategies to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. We saw staff gently encourage children to become familiar with numeracy through measuring, mark-making and construction. Children's progress was gathered and used as a baseline to track attainment. These measures underpinned service improvement and identified areas of future development which supports positive outcomes for children and families.

Staff understood the importance of their role, they regularly met as a team and other health professionals to discuss the wellbeing needs of children and families. This meant staff were very well informed and able to support any changes in children's care and circumstances. One parent said, "I feel that all staff know my child and are fully aware of their needs."

Family engagement was strongly encouraged; learning groups, talk and toast sessions, and cooking workshops offered a range of opportunities for families to get involved in nursery life. Parents told us they valued these experiences and felt welcomed and very supported by staff. These opportunities develop strong relationships between home and nursery and help children feel secure and safe.

The leadership team provided meaningful opportunities for staff to reflect on and develop their practice. Staff spoke positively about training they had completed which had positively impacted their practice, this included block play training. Chat books recorded how this training had improved play and learning experiences for children. We found these opportunities directly linked to the settings development plan which meant staff played an active role in improving outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff told us they worked extremely well together and were supported by the senior leadership team. Effective communication and their flexible approach meant children were cared for by staff who knew them very well and responded to their needs and wishes. One parent said, "My child is always welcomed with a smile and good morning from all staff. At the end of the day, the keyworker tells us about their day and again all staff say goodbye with a smile."

To support the continuity of care across the day, the senior leadership team planned staff breaks to minimise the impact on children's play and learning. However, we did observe occasions where deployment

of staff and communication could be improved. The senior leadership team have advised that they are reviewing staff communication methods; considering walkie-talkies.

We found staff used their skills and knowledge to mentor, support and share best practice. This included 'how to further develop floor and chat books.' Staff told us they welcomed these opportunities to develop their practice and work with colleagues.

Arrangements for absence, whether planned or unplanned, were managed to support minimum disruption to children's routines. The deployment of the team meant staff were allocated their 'base room.' This allowed staff to support each other, cover absences and identify when additional support was required. This approach supported the health, wellbeing and continuity of care for children.

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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