Alva ELC
Day Care of Children

Alva Primary School
Brook Street
Alva
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Telephone: 01259 760 987

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 November 2024

Service provided by:
Clackmannanshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002713

Service no:
CS2003015584

About the service

Alva Early Learning and Childcare is part of Clackmannanshire Council's early years provision. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of 74 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 15 children are under three years.

The service operates from rooms which have been refurbished to a high standard within Alva Primary School. There are two spacious playrooms, a large entrance area, a fully enclosed garden, toilets and changing facilities for children. The service is situated in Alva, Clackmannanshire, close to local shops and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 4 November between 09:15 and 17:00 and Tuesday 5 November between 09:10 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with the children using the service
- spoke with or received feedback from 19 family members
- spoke with staff members and management
- Spoke with one visiting professional that works with the service.
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing care from staff that knew them well as individuals.

- Children benefitted from improved mealtime experiences that were mostly relaxed and social.

- The service could continue to develop their approach to transitions across the day to ensure children experience a calm, relaxed environment.

- Relationships with families were supported as families were welcomed into the service daily.

- A range of interesting resources supported children to remain mostly engaged in their learning.

- Committed, inspirational leadership was leading to sustained improvements to children's experiences.

- Children were well supported as staff positioned themselves effectively across the service to ensure quality interactions and good supervision.

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?	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? 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced mostly nurturing and caring interactions from staff who knew them well. Staff sat with children and took time to talk to them about their day. When children became upset, staff offered comfort and reassurance. One parent shared, "The teachers give it their all and are very accommodating and caring." This supported children to feel safe and secure.

Personal plans for children were developed in partnership with families. One parent shared, "The staff have always kept me regularly up to date (verbally and written) so I haven't had the need to ask for anything further. " Another parent shared, "We review the plan regularly." As a result, families were valued and respected.

Where children required additional support as part of their daily routines and play experiences, care and strategies were planned to support children. Staff had developed good relationships with other agencies, including Speech and Language Therapists. This collaborative approach supported children to receive care that was right for them.

Meal times were a mostly social and positive experience for children. The service had focused on this as an area for development. Significant improvements had been made since the previous inspection. Children chose where they would like to have lunch, for example in the main room or the side room. They sat with adults and their peers and spoke about their day. This was a mostly calm experience.

Prior to lunch, children were asked to sit down for extended periods. For example, children sat in a large group time before going to have lunch. This meant that children's choice was not always respected. The setting had plans to further develop the transitions between play to lunch to ensure this is a calm, relaxed time. We encouraged the service to continue with their plans as this would further enhance this experience for children.

Children's medical needs were met within the service. Appropriate policies and procedures were in place to ensure the safe administration and storage of medication. Staff were confident to discuss children's individual medical needs. As a result, children's health was promoted.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were happy in their play. They benefitted from free flow play between the inside and outside spaces. There were opportunities for children to explore and develop their skills. One parent shared, "My child loves building, climbing and learning new things. They have many opportunities to do all of these." This supported children to remain engaged and have fun.

Children's learning and experiences were mostly supported by effective planning approaches. Staff highlighted planning as an area to develop within the service. The setting had focused on developing a shared approach to adult led learning. Staff were now beginning to observe children's play and experiences

and use this information to plan from their interests. This was at the early stages of development. The service had plans to continue to develop this approach to ensure there is a balance of responsive and planned experiences for children. We suggested the service continue as planned. This would further ensure children remain engaged in meaningful play and learning.

Children were supported to achieve through individual next steps and regular discussions with parents around children's progress and learning. Most parents told us that they had regular opportunities to discuss their child's learning. Staff met regularly to review children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being. This supported children's progress as next steps in learning had been identified and encouraged.

Children's learning and achievements were celebrated through displays, floor books and individual journals. Families were welcomed into the service daily at drop off and pick up times. This gave them opportunities to talk to children about their learning and celebrate their achievements together. One parent said, "The nursery does lots of activities that parents are able to participate or help with, e.g walks and book bugs, as well as arranging opportunities for parents to spend time with their children within the setting, and regular reviews." This meant families and children were respected.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from access to three large playroom areas, a large enclosed outdoor space, toilets and nappy changing facilities. There was plenty of ventilation and natural light in most rooms. Children's choice was respected as they were able to free flow play between the inside and outside. This promoted children's physical well-being and gave them opportunities to be active and benefit from regular fresh air.

The setting had a range of quality resources for children to access. This included natural resources such as sticks and stones, and a range of materials and paints in the art area. This supported most children to remain engaged in their learning and promoted creative thinking and problem solving. The service had begun to audit the resources in their environment to ensure they were consistently high quality and enhanced children's play and learning. They had identified some areas to further develop. We encouraged the service to continue as planned as this would support children to lead their own learning.

Children experienced a setting that was secure, mostly homely and inviting. Displays of children's comments and work promoted the message that they mattered. The environment was clean and well furnished. There was ample floor space which supported children to play together in both larger and smaller groups. Some cosy and comfortable spaces were available for children to rest, relax and have some time away from the group. We suggested that these spaces be further developed to ensure there were opportunities to rest and relax in all of the rooms. This would ensure children continually experience a homely nurturing environment.

The effective use of risk assessments promoted children's safely while allowing them to learn how to assess risk themselves. For example, one staff member had recently attended camp fire training. This experience was then available to children to access outside. We suggested the service continue to develop these real life experiences to promote children's understanding of risk. This would support children to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children's health was promoted as the service had implemented effective infection and control prevention practices. Children were supported to wash their hands before snack and lunch and areas were free from clutter and easily cleaned. This meant the risk of infection to children had been minimised.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

A shared vision values and aims promoted positive experiences for children. The leadership team had worked hard to review their vision as a whole school. These highlighted the importance of children and families feeling valued, included and respected. One parent told us, "I have had a very strong relationship with all of the staff I have been in contact with from the start. It is very warm and welcoming." This showed that children and families benefitted from a vision which put them at the heart.

Children benefitted from a staff team that were committed to improvement. Staff had opportunities to lead developments within the setting. One staff member had taken a lead role in the development of numeracy. They spoke confidently about the positive impact this had on children's experiences and learning. As a result, a shared leadership approach was developing.

An inclusive approach to self-evaluation was improving outcomes for children. The leadership team regularly gathered the views of families, children and staff to inform the quality of care that children experience. This was used effectively to plan for future improvements in the service.

Effective improvement planning meant that change in the service was sustainable and that the quality of experiences had continually improved since the previous inspection. A focused, manageable improvement plan was in place that aimed to improve outcomes for children. These improvements were targeted and ensured that it was at the right pace. This meant children's experiences continually improved. The leadership team had plans to ensure that this approach was embedded across the team. We encouraged the leadership team to continue as planned.

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff worked very well together and had developed strong professional relationships across the team. This contributed to the kind and caring environment that children experienced. One parent told us, "I find all the staff lovely and very approachable at all times." The team were committed to improving outcomes for children and were very supportive of each other.

Staff communicated well with one another, and deployed themselves effectively across the spaces. They ensured they communicated effectively if a task took them away from children. This meant that children experienced continuity of care. Staff understood when to engage and when to stand back and enable

children to develop their play at their pace. Through skilful engagement, opportunities were provided for children to develop their skills and share their ideas. As a result, children were busy in their play and the environment felt calm and relaxed.

Staff deployment and staffing levels took account of the skills mix, routines and activities of the day. Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensured positive transitions and communication. Leaders recognised the need for high quality interactions that promoted children's wellbeing and safety. Staff breaks were planned to minimise impact on the children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. This ensured safety and high-quality outcomes for children.

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. This learning had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress and wider improvements in the setting.

Staff told us they felt well-supported in their roles. They felt that they received regular feedback on their work and felt able to approach the leadership team for support or with ideas to improve the service. Staff told us that their views were respected and their own wellbeing was well considered. Staff knew children very well and secure relationships between them had been established. We witnessed children being supported by staff in ways which were appropriate to meet their needs. This meant that children felt safe, secure, and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported them.

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 support children's individual health needs, the provider should ensure that medication procedures, labelling and reviews are in line with best practice guidance. Medication must be labelled appropriately, documentation completed and reviewed at least every three months or termly with parents/carers.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective.' (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 18 April 2023.

Action taken since then

Children's individual health needs were met as appropriate policies and procedures were in place to ensure the safe administration and storage of medication. Medication was labelled appropriately and appropriate forms and reviews were in place. Therefore, this area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support a culture of continuous improvement that addresses key areas for improvement, the provider should implement a robust and effective quality assurance system to monitor and sustain positive

experiences for children across the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.' (HSCS 4.23) and '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 18 April 2023.

Action taken since then

Children benefitted from a service that had continually improved since the previous inspection. Robust and effective quality assurance systems were now in place and improving experiences and outcomes for children. Therefore 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?	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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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