St. Serf's ELC
Day Care of Children

St.Serfs Road
Tullibody
Alloa
FK10 2RD

Telephone: 01259 722 950

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 February 2023

Service provided by:
Clackmannanshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002713

Service no:
CS2003015593

About the service

St. Serf's ELC is a daycare of children service which is provided by Clackmannshire Council. It is part of St. Serf's Primary School and operates from a separate building close to the school. The service is situated in a residential area of Tullibody, Alloa and is close to all local amenities. The service provides funded early learning and childcare for a maximum of 74 children aged 2 years to those not yet of an age to attend primary school, of whom a maximum number of 15 children are aged 2 years to under 3 years at any one time.

Children have access to a designated entry area and large playroom. Other smaller rooms are available for quieter activities, including a sensory room. A kitchen area is available for the preparation of snacks, lunches and baking activities. Toilets and a nappy changing area are situated outwith the playroom area. Children also have access to a boot room where they can change into appropriate outdoor clothing before accessing a choice of three separate garden areas.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 27 February 2023 between 08:45 and 16:45 . The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 several children in the service
- spoke with two families on the day of inspection; one family by telephone and reviewed emails from two families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were confident and had fun as they happily explored all that nursery had to offer.
- Children had free flow access to the outdoor area throughout the day.
- Children experienced kind, nurturing approaches to their care.
- Staff communicated and worked well together.
- Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to 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?	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?	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? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

The kind, caring and nurturing approaches experienced by children meant they were confident and happy as their wellbeing was supported. Staff had developed positive relationships with children and knew them well. They were quick to respond to children's needs and requests, and supported them appropriately. This meant that children felt valued and respected as individuals as their needs were being met.

Lunch times were organised by staff, into two sittings. Children were encouraged to develop independence skills and try new foods in a mostly calm and relaxed atmosphere. Some children helped to set the tables with placemats, crockery and cutlery in preparation for lunch arriving. All children were supported to select what they wanted to eat and served themselves. For example, they confidently ladled soup into their bowls and poured their own drinks. Staff recognised daily routines as an opportunity to promote positive attachments. They sat with children and chatted to them as they ate. This ensured children were safe and supported and promoted a caring, positive social experience.

Personal plans had been developed by staff and represented the views of children and families. This supported children's overall wellbeing and ensured they experienced consistency and continuity of care. Personal plans were reviewed and updated regularly with families. We discussed the importance of ensuring these were updated as and when required, outwith the scheduled review. For example, if there had been significant events in children's lives. This would enable staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes.

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were confident and had fun as they happily explored all that nursery had to offer. They told us that they liked coming to nursery and playing with their friends. One child said "I love my nursery because the stuff outside is so fun." Staff were responsive and used observations of children's interests to inform planning. They spoke knowledgeably about providing provocations to promote children's natural curiosity. For example, children had been showing an interest in the birds visiting their garden. Staff provided opportunities for children to make bird feeders to support this interest. This prompt was also successful when enticing children into the garden who wouldn't usually choose to go outside. We observed children being supported to extend their thinking by skilled staff through the use of effective questioning. One child was being introduced to new vocabulary as they were encouraged to think "strategically" whilst playing knots and crosses with a member of staff. The child repeated the word and was excited to tell us that they had won the game. A parent also shared with us that they felt their child had "come on leaps and bounds since starting nursery". As a result we could see that children were busy, engaged and progressing well.

Staff worked well together and met regularly to share observations of children's play and learning, and to discuss possible next steps. Sharing information about children meant that staff supported and encouraged all children to take forward and develop their interests and learn new skills.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

A recent audit of the environment meant that children were warmly welcomed into a cosy, softly lit area which gave them a sense of belonging. This gentle introduction to the setting supported children to settle in, if needed, before moving through into the large, carefully considered play area. Children could choose to return to the relaxing space throughout the day to read stories, play games or rest. The main playroom offered lots of natural light and ventilation, with ample space for children's needs. Children also benefitted from the use of a sensory room and a quiet breakout room at times throughout their day. Visits to these rooms were supported by staff and gave children time away from the larger, bustling playroom. This meant that children's wellbeing was being supported and gave them a strong message that they mattered.

Staff recognised the positive impact being outdoors had on children's overall wellbeing. They ensured children had free flow access to outdoor spaces throughout the day. These areas were secure and appropriately staffed to ensure children's safety. Children were encouraged to develop independence and fine motor skills as they changed into outdoor clothing in the boot room, before going outside. Staff provided a variety of activities for children to explore in the different garden areas. The "big back garden" offered children opportunities to explore nature and develop their gross motor skills whilst climbing and swinging on the hammock. The other garden areas, the "concrete garden" and the planting area were also accessed during the session. We observed keyworkers using the concrete garden with children during group time to promote physical activity as children ran races, for example. This garden area was also used to offer free flow access to outdoor play during lunchtime for children. As a result children were learning about the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle.

Children benefitted from a clean, organised setting that was well maintained. Staff understood the arrangements for, and the importance of, cleaning within the service. Regular handwashing should be encouraged throughout the session to further enhance infection prevention and control measures.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The leadership and staff team were committed to delivering a quality service for children and families. They had a shared vision to create a welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos throughout the early learning and childcare (ELC) and school setting. This was evident and reflected in the compassionate interactions we witnessed during our visit. Leadership opportunities supported staff to develop confidence and an understanding of the impact they each had on improving outcomes for children. The positive ethos meant the staff team were proactive in taking shared responsibility for well-informed change. As a result children benefitted from a staff team who were motivated and responsive to meeting their needs.

The service had developed an improvement plan that was incorporated into the wider school plan. Effective policies, procedures and quality assurance processes were in place and also supported the development of the service. The leadership team described how they planned to create a separate improvement plan for the

ELC, going forward. We suggested this should be developed through self-evaluation and by gathering the views of children, families and partners as a starting point. This would ensure the culture of continuous improvement was further promoted and high-quality learning through play was at the heart of improvement planning.

The service understood the importance of parental involvement and the impact this had on outcomes for children. They were welcoming families back into the setting at pick up time and offered opportunities for them to join their child during their nursery day. Family learning sessions saw families being invited in to help their children decorate and personalise their learning journal, for example. Coffee and chat sessions provided opportunities for staff to share information with families and promoted positive relationships. Feedback from parents was mixed, with differing views. These have been shared with the service to contribute to their development plan. However, they all agreed that staff worked hard and were approachable if they had any concerns. One parent shared that they felt "communication is definitely improving" and their child was "very happy." Partnership working will further support families to be included in the service provided and develop strong relationships.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

Children benefitted from a staff team who had a range of skills, knowledge and experience. Staff communicated and worked well together to ensure children were safe and engaged in quality experiences throughout the nursery session. They were proactive when anticipating where and when support might be needed. This created a respectful atmosphere which ensured children's experiences were positive and appropriately supported throughout the day.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. Staff were flexible and breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children whilst making sure staff had time to rest and be refreshed.

Staff knew children 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. Arrangements were in place to ensure continuity of care for children across the day and week, and took account of staff working patterns and shifts. This meant that children felt safe, secure and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported them.

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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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