Crosshill Early Years Centre
Day Care of Children

Carrick Drive
Crosshill
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Telephone: 01655 885 803

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 January 2023

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003016134

About the service

Crosshill Early Years Centre is located in Crosshill, South Ayrshire. It is attached to Crosshill Primary School. The service is provided by South Ayrshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a daycare of children's service for a maximum of 20 children aged from two years old to those not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 10 will be 2 to 3 years old.

Children have access to a large, bright playroom and their own secure outdoor space; children can freely move between indoors and outdoors. The centre is located in a small rural village and is within walking distance of a local shop and village amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 January 2023 between 9:30 and 14:45. We gave feedback to the service onsite on 31 January 2023 at 15:15. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

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

Key messages

- Children were having fun enjoying the resources and experiences available for play and learning.
- The environment was calm, warm, relaxed and clean.
- Playrooms were inviting with some curious and interesting resources to stimulate play and learning.
- Children had access to an engaging and stimulating outdoor area.
- Innovative practice was being created and used to support children's digital literacy.
- The service had established excellent links with partners to assist children's speech and language development.
- Staff worked well as a team and supported each other in providing positive outcomes for children.
- Families were encouraged to be part of nursery life.

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Children experienced nurturing care and support from a staff team who respected each child as an individual. Staff were kind, loving and responsive in their approach which met children's needs. Staff cuddled and comforted children to support emotional wellbeing. Children were able to tell us who would help them if they needed support. Parents described staff as caring and nurturing. As a result, children were settled, happy and experienced positive attachments with staff.

Lunch time was relaxed, unhurried and promoted children to take ownership of the routine. They had opportunities to prepare and enjoy their food and were supported by staff who valued the rich learning opportunities that a sociable lunch offers. Children ate lunch in the school dining hall, but a separate quiet, height appropriate table and chairs had been resourced. The table was set with a centre piece and a table cloth. This experience provided rich opportunities to develop language as children chatted with friends and staff. We could see this routine was well established. This meant that children developed important life skills.

Personal plans were in place and were updated regularly with children and parents. All staff knew individual children's likes, dislikes and interests. This meant that they were able to plan and support next steps in learning. Staff were skilled at observing children's play and used support strategies when required. This included referring to specialist services. Interventions and support strategies were reviewed to ensure positive outcomes for children.

We saw that staff and management had developed communication methods and resources for supporting children and their families. Reference objects, use of re-statement and staff using their eyes and ears to listen to children were elements that we observed to be verging on to exemplary practice. This work had been undertaken in partnership with children, parents and other professionals. As a result, we observed children to be happy, settled and confident.

Children's views and ideas were valued and contributed to the rich learning and fun experiences. For example, children were leading their own learning, and being supported by nurturing staff who understood the key principles of nurture and were applying them to their day to day practice. As a result, children felt they mattered.

Face-to-face meetings and the use of Twitter gave parents the opportunity to be involved in children's experiences. Parents told us they had regular opportunities to discuss their children's individual needs and keyworkers updated them every day on what children had been doing. One parent told us: "Twitter is constantly being updated with photos and videos of activities they are doing. They are also good at updating myself on events during pick up at the end of the day."

Parents felt welcomed and were confident their children were happy. A parent commented: "The staff at the nursery know my daughter as well as I do."

Staff told us they had sensitive arrangements around children's rest and quiet time routines. Staff worked closely with families to establish routines which responded to children's individual needs and family wishes. Children rested in a calm and relaxing environment which followed safe sleep guidance. Staff were available to quickly respond to children's smiles, tears or gestures. This supported children's safety, emotional security and wellbeing. As a result, children felt safe and secure

1.3 Play and learning

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Children were settled, happy and engaged in play experiences, both indoors and outdoors. All children had direct access to the outdoor learning environment and could freely access this area independently or with support. Staff told us they used a balance between adult and child-led experiences to support children's learning and development.

Staff had developed the use of Quick Response (QR) codes throughout the nursery, we saw tablets available for children to scan QR codes and listen to popular stories, rhymes and songs. We also observed that staff had developed a ThingLink, an interactive digital literacy tool that supported children's digital curiosity, creativity and communication. One parent commented: "They send home QR codes every week for their listening library and my child is obsessed with it and loves seeing their little collection build up over the weeks. My child also loves being able to interact with things as well, so the ThingLink provided for us is really fun too, she loves Rusty the Robot." This was innovative and showed that staff had listened to the needs of the children.

Children were having lots of fun and were deeply involved in their play. Staff observed and knew when to support and 'scaffold' the children's play or stand back. Staff followed children's interests and used creative approaches to successfully engage children's imagination. This approach enriches children's play and learning opportunities and also demonstrates that their views matter.

Children benefited from regular learning and connections with the wider community. This included visits to the local park, joining up with the village elderly group, visiting the church, park, and taking walks around the village to see what they could see. As a result, children developed an appreciation for nature and connections with their community.

The service had established close links with the local toddler group which gave the children the opportunity to engage with other children in the local area and supported positive relationships for starting the nursery.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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.

The service operated from a large room within the school. They had their own secure entrance door, however had an internal door that led to the school hall. This meant that children and families were included as part of the school community.

Children experienced a setting that was clean, inviting and welcoming. The playrooms benefited from natural light and ventilation. Staff had recently made changes to the spaces to be more open, natural, calm and homely. Furniture and resources were of a high standard and organised to support free flow play.

Staff took pride in creating play spaces that were reflective of children's interests and sparked curiosity and exploration. Parents commented on how calm and interesting the environment was. This promoted a strong sense that children mattered.

We were confident that staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities in maintaining a high standard of infection prevention and control practices across the nursery. Staff ensured hand hygiene was promoted in the outdoor area with a hand washing station. As a result, children benefited from a safe environment that promoted their health and wellbeing.

The service had risk management systems in place that were reviewed with staff. Children were included in assessing risks in the garden every day. This meant that they learned about keeping safe and had ownership of their learning environment.

Children benefited from a recently developed large, secure garden. Staff had been creative in their approaches to outdoor play. They valued the importance of children experiencing outdoor play regardless of the weather. For example, wet weather clothing was available and this allowed children the opportunity to be outdoors as they chose. Staff had also considered and planned for children having the same opportunities to experience a breadth of learning as they would indoors. This included block play, loose parts, spaces to be creative, a muddy kitchen and a welly wish tree that promoted aspiration and communication. One parent commented: "The staff try really hard to keep things interesting and reuse all sorts of materials for their outdoor learning space."

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

There was a very positive and empowering ethos within the service. The nursery had a shared vision, values and aims with the school. In particular, the shared vision for all to "live, laugh and learn" aptly described the nursery service. The service had developed Our Promise that complemented the shared vision, values and aims; these reflected the nurturing attitudes and care the nursery showed their children, parents and staff.

Regular communication with families took place through a variety of methods. For example, online platforms like Twitter, face-to-face discussions and regular personal plan meetings. This contributed to the positive relationships families had built with staff. Parents told us they received regular updates in person and online. As a result, families felt valued and included in children's learning. One parent commented: "We speak everyday about things my child will be doing and trying that day and I have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss what activities and targets will benefit them the most."

Children, parents and staff were consulted to influence improvements within the service. This was done through informal discussions, online interaction and nursery self-evaluation. Gathering the views of all was important to the service. They used this feedback to support their improvement journey and enrich learning experiences for children. As a result, children felt included as their views were listened to.

Quality assurance and ongoing monitoring of the provision and learning experiences were beginning to be carried out. The service used best practice guidance such as A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare and How good is our early learning and childcare? to support them in this area. We could see self-evaluation was being embedded and beginning to have a positive impact on children's learning and experiences. For example, we saw monitoring of how staff led, interacted and responded to children's experiences. As a result, children's wellbeing and development was at the centre of the service.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

4.3 Staff deployment

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

The deployment of staff within the service was well-managed and effective to meet children's needs. The service is small, but well organised and staff work well together. This ensured continuity of care for the children and their families. There was a lovely culture of professionalism and mutual respect and support between staff, management, families and the wider school team which had created an inclusive, welcoming ethos. Staff told us they felt valued and enjoyed working as part of the team at Crosshill Early Years Centre. As a result, children and families received the support that was right for them, at the right time to ensure children reached their full potential.

The headteacher has responsibility for Crosshill Primary School and Early Years Centre and another local primary school seven miles away. The principal teacher also worked between both schools. They were the management team. We observed that this arrangement worked well for the service. We found that the management team was involved in the daily life of the nursery, knew all children and families, and made sure staff felt well supported, empowered and included in the school community. As a result, everyone benefited from a service that was well led.

Staff skills and knowledge complimented one another and resulted in high quality experiences for children. For example, staff had taken on 'champion' roles and shared their knowledge and skills with the wider team. This included working with school staff on using digital communication to support and extend children's learning. Another example would be staff developing 'Wobbel Yoga' health and wellbeing sessions in the nursery. The use of the 'wobbel' board, enhanced children's body awareness, creativity, balance and strength.

Children moved between play spaces indoors and outdoors confidently. This showed us they felt safe and secure. Staff had a very good awareness of where all children were and moved to ensure they were always supervised. The team was committed to continuous professional learning that included attending training from the local authority on recording quality observations, schemas, safeguarding and promoting language development through play. We were confident staff understood and could respond to concerns to ensure children were safe. This meant that children experienced care from a team that was dedicated to ensuring positive outcomes for all.

Regular team meetings provided opportunities for staff to come together and reflect on children's experiences. For example, staff had reviewed the environment, then made changes to create inviting play spaces. As a result, children received high quality play and learning opportunities from a committed team.

Children benefited from a very good service that valued their rights to play and have fun through quality interactions, positive relationships and a high-quality provision. As a result, children, staff and parents were very happy at Crosshill Early Years Centre.

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

In order to ensure that staff deployment is appropriate across the setting, we recommend the local authority assess/review staffing based on children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My needs are met by the right number of people" (HSCS 3.15).

This area for improvement was made on 13 February 2019.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement had been fully met. The service had expanded due to the early years expansion programme and as a result issues with staff deployment had 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

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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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