Culzean Early Years Centre
Day Care of Children

Maybole Community Campus
Kirkoswald Road
Maybole
KA19 8BP

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 April 2024

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003016135

About the service

Culzean Early Years Centre provides a daycare of children's service in Maybole, South Ayrshire. The service has recently relocated to a new building, amalgamating two early years services in the local community - Gardenrose Early Years Centre and Cairn Early Years Centre. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 120 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of those, no more than 20 aged 2 to under 3.

The service is located within Maybole village and is close to local parks and shops. The early years centre shares a campus with two other primary schools, one high school, a leisure facility and the local Police station. The nursery consists of three large playrooms, a sensory room, a family room, a central atrium and a secure outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 and 24 April 2024 between 08:45 and 17:15. Feedback was shared with the service on 24 April 2024. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service was registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and 14 of their family members
- spoke with staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Families benefited from the strong leadership in the service.
- Staff and the leadership team were committed to providing high quality care and support.
- The new building had brought together two established early years centres in one building, staff had developed positive relationships with all families and were involving them in the daily life of the service.
- Interactions between staff and children were warm, caring and nurturing.
- Older children were confident and had fun leading their own play both indoors and outdoors.
- Staff were passionate about their roles within the service.
- Well-thought out and well-resourced play areas supported quality play and learning experiences for older children.
- Further extension to enrich play experiences for all children should be considered.
- Enhanced experiences for younger children should be developed further.

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?	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? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

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.

The positive ethos within the service meant that a culture of respect and inclusiveness was embedded in practice. Children experienced positive interactions which had enabled them to form close attachments to all staff and develop nice friendships with each other. Children had a sense of belonging as they felt welcomed, valued and safe in the setting.

Partnership working with families and other agencies was well-established. Children's development, learning and wellbeing were supported as regular contact enabled information to be shared. As a result, staff talked knowledgably about the needs of children and how they were supported. Parents told us that the service shared resources that helped them support children at home. By working together, positive outcomes for children were promoted.

Information contained in children's personal plans supported their wellbeing. We saw that staff used effective techniques to meet their needs. They understood the importance of going at children's pace with patient, nurturing and responsive interactions. Children's emotional wellbeing was supported.

All children experienced positive meal and snack time experiences. Children had opportunities to learn life skills as they served themselves and tidied up when they were finished. Children ate lunch, in two sittings, in the atrium. Staff were flexible and seamlessly got their lunch while the children ate theirs. Children benefited from the social aspect of mealtimes as they chatted with friends and staff. The lunch environment was calm and children were comfortable in it. Staff sat with children. The catering staff knew each child well and interacted effectively to support a very nice lunch time experience for all children. However, the atrium was too hot and lacked ventilation during the lunch time, we asked the service provider to consider safe measures that would reduce the heat in this area.

If children required medication, we confirmed that best practice was followed as appropriate information was recorded, safely stored and audits carried out. This helped ensure it was safely administered to children at the right time.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Older children benefited from a well-organised environment where a range of activities supported their development and interests. This meant that they could lead their play both indoors and outdoors. Continued development of open-ended resources will help children use their imagination, curiosity and investigation.

Direct access to the outdoor area and wider community meant children had opportunities to play in the natural environment. Children would benefit further from staff supporting them to extend and enrich their play and learning experiences. As a result, there were some missed opportunities for children to progress in their learning and development. For example, there was a piano in the outdoor area with a simple tune for children to play, this should be extended to several well-known tunes.

Staff promoted older children's literacy, language and numeracy through play. There were some missed opportunities that we spoke to the management team about. Where children needed more help to communicate, pictures and objects were effectively used. These techniques supported children to have a voice and make choices in their play.

Some meaningful observations and reviews ensured children's progress, development and learning was monitored. Along with parents, staff identified next steps which ensured progression was supported. Child-centred planning approaches should continue to be consistently considered across the centre.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children

Staff had created a safe, welcoming and well-organised environment which was inviting and supported children's play and learning. Cosy areas were available which ensured children could relax and rest if they wanted to. In addition, a sensory room offered children a separate area if they needed quiet time away from the playroom. Staff listened to them, responded to their cues and supported their choices. As a result, we saw that children had positive experiences as they influenced the pace of their day.

Displays, photographs and artwork contributed to the children's feeling of belonging and inclusion in the setting. Resources and toys were arranged so that children could choose what they wanted to do. The layout meant children had space to develop their games and play as they could move resources around.

Direct access to the outdoors areas offered older children stimulating places to play. These were well used by children as they liked being in the natural environment. They could develop their physical skills, use their imagination and socialise with their friends.

Twice weekly access to the woods behind the school playground offered children a different experience and environment. Rules were well-established, and we saw happy children having fun. Children were given opportunities to opt in or out of the forest adventures. Staff should continue to enhance and enrich this joyful learning experience.

We heard how the wider community was used to enhance children's experiences. Access to the on campus swimming pool for older children had been established. Links with the local shop had been established and children could visit and use voucher cards to purchase snack items and resources. One parent told us: "My child is able to practice 'risky' play in a safe environment outside in the playground. She really enjoys forest school and has learned how to play in the outdoors respectively. My child also enjoys going walks with her group."

The spread of infection was minimised as the playrooms were well-ventilated, hand washing promoted and regular cleaning took place. To ensure children's safety, staff completed risk assessments and carried out daily checks of the indoor and outdoor areas which helped reduce any risk identified. Older children were encouraged to undertake their own assessment of risk. Ventilation in the atrium should be considered.

Staff were security conscious and had reviewed risk assessments and procedures. They ensured children were accounted for throughout the day and when they went to use facilities within the campus. A secure door entry system was in place, so staff knew who was in the building. We were satisfied that children's information was safely stored.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children

Children and families benefited from the strong leadership in place. This resulted in a staff team who were committed to providing a quality service. They implemented values that promoted a positive ethos and respected children's rights.

Using national and local guidance, meant there was a clear focus on self-evaluation and quality assurance. This had resulted in a shared vision for the development of the service.

Combining two existing local early years centres in one building had been well-considered and recognition had been given to sensitively ensuring consistent approaches and systems were in place. Management had worked hard to establish this effectively. Although at an early stage for the combined service, regular reviews and audits meant that the work of the service was being monitored. This meant staff were supported in their role as they were mentored and given guidance about their practice. For example, ensuring all information was recorded in personal plans.

Opportunities were in place that supported parents' and children's views to be gathered. Children's voice was captured in floor books, mind maps and planning which were used to support their interests. This should continue to be used to extend learning opportunities for children. Parents and carers were routinely involved in the work of the service and their children's care. We saw examples of you said, we did methods of sharing parents' views and development progress. This meant children and their families felt valued and knew their opinions mattered.

To support the improvement agenda, staff had leadership roles. Working with colleagues across the setting, promoted positive outcomes for all children. They used evaluation to show how children benefited from initiatives such as the woodland experiences. Their findings were used to plan sessions that helped children develop their skills and knowledge. For example, they were building resilience and becoming more independent in the outdoor environment. As these embed and develop further, these opportunities will support children in Maybole to reach their potential.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Children were supported by a staff team who had a range of knowledge, experience and skills. Their sound knowledge of child development, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the wellbeing indicators resulted in children's individual needs being met. Staff were committed and enthusiastic in their role which meant children were being supported to reach their potential. They talked knowledgeably about children's individual needs, next steps and how they were being met.

Children were supported with dignity and respect because all staff across the setting used a rights-based approach to support them. Interactions were warm, kind and compassionate and children were listened to.

Staff knew all children well and consistently responded to children's individual care and support needs. Praise and encouragement promoted children's self-esteem and continued achievement.

Children and families felt valued as a result of the shared ethos. The management team recognised the importance of the service being appropriately staffed. Staff were flexible and worked together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. They were empowered to deploy themselves and respond to the needs of children across all areas. This meant that the necessary levels of supervision for children were in place. This ensured children experienced the best care outcomes.

Changes to the staff team had been well-managed. The management team had carefully and effectively planned the combining of the two staff teams. To promote continuity of care, an induction programme had been developed. This helped staff know about children's individual needs and how to support 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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