Maidens Early Years Centre
Day Care of Children

35A Shanter Road
Maidens
Girvan
KA26 9NL

Telephone: 01655 885 806

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 December 2023

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003016139

About the service

Maidens Early Years Centre is situated in the small coastal village of Maidens, on the coast of the Firth of Clyde at the southern end of Maidenhead Bay. The service is an integral part of Maidens Primary School and operates from a large playroom and outdoor learning areas.

The service is registered to provide a daycare of children's service to a maximum of 32 children: 10 children aged 2 years to under 3 years old and 22 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school. The service is operated by South Ayrshire Council.

Local amenities include two children's play parks, a village shop and access to a long sandy beach. The village is surrounded by farmland and has a quaint harbour with scenic views. Close by is Culzean castle and country park.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 December 2023 between 9:00 and 14:45. 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:

- Spoke with several children using the service and ten of their family members.
- Spoke with 5 staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed and sampled documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced high quality care and support from staff who knew them very well.
- Staff were nurturing and committed to achieving positive outcomes for children.
- Children were happy, safe and secure and had access to high quality learning experiences indoors and outdoors.
- Children's rights were promoted and respected including their right to play.
- Staff worked well together and were well supported by the management team.
- The needs of individual families were well supported and met.
- Families were included in the life of the service.
- The service was well led by the management team.

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing care and support from a staff team who knew them very well. Staff were kind, caring and responsive towards the children, offering cuddles and reassurance when needed which ensured children's individual needs were met. Children were able to tell us who would help them if they needed support. Families described staff as caring and kind. As a result, children were settled, happy and experienced positive relationships with staff.

Children were confident and independent as they played and made choices. Staff promoted and respected children's rights and encouraged them to express their views and be involved in planning their own learning. Staff were also sensitive when promoting children's right to dignity and privacy during personal care routines. This meant that children's rights were valued and respected.

Children were familiar with the lunch time routine. Lunch was served in the school dining hall and children sat at child-sized tables and chairs. Lunch time was relaxed, unhurried and promoted children's independence. Children's food was presented in platters for them to self-serve and choose their own portion sizes. They were pouring their water and using their cutlery. As a result, children were developing their independence, confidence, and self-help skills. Staff sat at each table with children and chatted about their morning, encouraging them to enjoy a positive sociable experience. We asked the service to consider moving the younger children closer to the other children during the lunchtime experience to ensure a more inclusive environment for all children.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning which took health and wellbeing indicators into account. Families were involved in developing and reviewing children's plan's ensuring information was shared and up to date. Staff were skilled at observing children's play and knew individual children's interests and preferences. This meant that they were able to plan and support next steps in learning ensuring positive outcomes for children.

The management team and staff were committed to ensuring families were well supported. They worked well with families who needed additional support and ensured they received the right support at the right time. This included making referrals and working in partnership with specialist services to identify and implement the appropriate support. As a result, children received the support they needed to reach their full potential.

Children's emotional security and wellbeing was support through daily sleep routines. Some children slept in the afternoon and a cosy area was set up with comfortable sleep mats and blankets. This supported children's safety, emotional security, and wellbeing. As a result, children felt safe and secure.

1.3 Play and learning.

Children were happy confident and engaged in play experiences, both indoors and outdoors. The indoor playroom had a range of different learning areas enabling children to choose where they wanted to play and

learn. Learning areas included a cosy story den, creative area and access to sensory experiences, such as sand, water and playdough. This meant that children were using their senses to learn. They were also using their creative skills, for example, children were decorating Christmas cards with glitter and then putting them into envelopes. This was quite challenging for some children; however, they showed perseverance as staff praised and acknowledged their achievements.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. Staff told us they used a balance between adult and child-led experiences to support children's learning and development. Children had access to real life tools and resources to develop their life skills and learning. For example, children were using plyers and safety googles in the block area as well as crockery and cutlery in the home area. The home area was situated in the centre of the room and provided high quality learning experiences and opportunities for children to extend their learning into other play areas. For example, children were 'cooking' in the home area and this was extended to the mud kitchen outdoors.

Staff had introduced the use of Quick Reference (QR) codes which enabled children to use technology to scan and listen to their favourite stories and songs and play interactive games. In addition, children had access to a smart board and computer which they used to develop digital literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, children were developing their knowledge of information technology.

Staff were skilled and knowledgeable about child development. They interacted with children in a calm and supportive manner, listening to their thoughts and ideas. They asked open ended questions and encouraged children to think about solutions and use their problem-solving skills. For example, a child wanted to fill the water trough outside, and the water lying in the hose had frozen. Staff encouraged children to think about why this had happened and how they could solve the problem. As a result, children were finding solutions to problems.

Children were supported to build strong links within their local community. For example, an intergeneration literacy programme had been developed between the service and the local care home. This gave children a sense of belonging.

We spoke with many families and sought feedback from questionnaires. Families were very happy with the service and provided positive feedback. They told us about the positive relationships their children had with staff and the quality of their experiences. One family commented,' My child has come on leaps and bound since starting the nursery and we couldn't be any happier'.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The service operated from a large playroom within the school. They had their own security entrance for families to access and an internal door that led to the school hall. A cloakroom was located in the foyer where children had an individual peg for jackets and bags. This promoted a sense of belonging.

The playroom was warm, welcoming, calm, and furnished to a high standard. Play equipment and resources were well maintained and the playroom was well ventilated with plenty of natural light. The playroom was well laid out and organised into specific learning areas which children could access freely. Each area was

inviting and interesting, providing children with a range of exciting opportunities for them to learn and develop their skills. Children used all areas within the playroom and staff ensured that areas were well equipped with age and stage appropriate resources that sparked their interests and curiosity. This promoted a strong sense that children mattered.

The outdoor play areas were safe, secure, and spacious. Children were encouraged to play outdoors during all weathers and had access to waterproof clothing and boots. Staff understood the value and benefits of outdoor play. Children also benefitted from a large risky play area that was designed to provide fun and challenging experiences that promoted their physical development. This contributed to children's overall health and wellbeing.

A separate cosy cabin was close by which had soft furnishing and resources for children if they needed time away to regulate their emotions and receive emotional support from staff. This meant that children were well supported, and their emotional needs were met.

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 service. Staff ensured good hygiene practices were promoted throughout the day, for example handwashing before and after snack and lunchtime routines. As a result, children benefited from a safe environment that promoted their health and wellbeing.

The service had risk assessments in place which were reviewed by staff and the management team. These included local outings and visits to the forest. Children were assessing their own risks with the support of staff. They were talking about what was safe to climb on and children were encouraged to think about risks and the benefits of risks taking. This meant that they learned about keeping themselves safe and taking ownership of their learning environment.

Appropriate systems were in place to manage electronic information in line with general data protection requirements. This meant that children's information was securely stored.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The service was an integral part of the school and shared the same vision, values and aims. There was a strong focus and commitment to embed their values into daily practice, including nurture principles, inclusion and equity, and children's rights. We observed a warm, caring and nurturing environment in which staff promoted and respected children's rights. As a result, children felt included and respected.

The management team and staff were committed to providing a high-quality service for children and families and this was evident during our conversations. Staff spoke about how they wanted to continuously improve the service and how this would impact on positive outcomes for children.

Quality assurance systems were in place which included a shared improvement plan and self-evaluation processes to monitor and review the quality of the service. The service improvement plan identified specific priorities for the service to fully involve families in their children's learning and development. For example, staff were leading developments to promote family engagement using home link bags to support children's

emotional, literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, families felt valued and included in children's learning and development. One family commented, 'the bags are good fun and I'm learning too'.

Families were actively encouraged to participate in the life of the service through ongoing feedback strategies. These included gathering their views and opinions on a range of important matters. For example, using questionnaires, a voting system, and a question of the month. This meant that families could contribute to the overall improvement of the service.

Self-evaluation processes were in place and staff were meaningfully involved in monitoring and reviewing the quality of the service. Staff reflected together to inform future planning and changes to improve outcomes for children. The management team lead the process and 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?'. This meant that self-evaluation was at the heart of improvement planning.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

The management team recognised that some staff changes had occurred within the team and that the new team was still forming. The service was appropriately staffed throughout the day and staff moved between the indoor and outdoor areas ensuring children's safety. Children moved freely between the areas, and this told us that they were safe and secure.

The team worked well together offering support and flexibility when needed. Although the service operated a key worker system, staff knew the children very well, and good arrangements were in place to share information about their needs. Staff managed their weekly work patterns and lunch breaks well, to ensure continuity of care across the day and good communication with families.

Staff were skilled and knowledgeable about child development. They interacted with children in a calm and supportive manner, listening to their thoughts and ideas. There was a positive ethos of ensuring children had high quality experiences every day and that they were safe and secure. This meant that children received high quality play and learning opportunities from a responsive and skilled team.

Staff were encouraged to look outwards and work in partnership with other services to share new thinking and approaches to children's learning and how this could improve the service. They told us that they enjoyed attending training opportunities and sharing practice as well as learning from other services. The management team lead the staff very well and supported their aspirations to undertake leadership roles and responsibilities to further develop their skills and knowledge.

Children benefitted from a very good service that valued their right to play and have fun. Staff had formed positive relationships with children and families and valued their input. The management team and staff worked extremely well to provide a high-quality service that was well led. As a result, children and families were very happy with the service.

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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.