Tarbolton Early Years Centre
Day Care of Children

Montgomerie Street
Tarbolton
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 May 2024

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003016140

About the service

Tarbolton Early Years Centre is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 62 children aged 2 to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. Of those 62 no more than 6 are aged 2 to under 3.

The service is provided by South Ayrshire Council. It is situated within Tarbolton Primary School which is close to shops, local amenities and public transport routes. There is an entrance foyer with a secure entry system. Children are cared for in two playrooms and a dining area. Each playroom has direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Children also have access to a large outdoor woodland area within the school playground.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 and 23 May 2024 between the hours of 10:00 and 17:30. 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:

- Observed children using the service and received questionnaires from eight of their families.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Received electronic questionnaires from nine staff.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and compassionate care.
- Children were happy and engaged in play and learning experiences throughout our visit.
- Staff passionately promoted the importance of outdoor play in all weather.
- Children and families were at the heart of the service and their plans for improvement.
- The management team had recognised the importance of supporting staff wellbeing and developing positive relationships across the staff 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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - 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 outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and compassionate care. Staff interactions were nurturing and responsive to children's individual needs and preferences. We saw children confidently approaching staff for comfort and cuddles. As a result children had formed trusting relationships and felt secure.

Children benefitted from a calm, unhurried lunchtime. They enjoyed a hot nutritious meal while chatting with their friends and staff. Staff sat with the children and encouraged positive eating habits and talked with them about their day. Children were supported to self-serve and clear their own plates. This meant that children enjoyed a sociable mealtime that promoted their independence. We suggested considering ways to reduce the length of time that some children waited at the table before and after eating. This would enhance the positive impact of their mealtime experience.

Children's well-being and development was supported by staff who knew them well. One parent told us, "The staff are always fantastic in supporting us with the different things we have going on at home that may affect my child at nursery." Whilst personal plans were in place for all children that contained relevant information and strategies to support staff to meet children's needs. Some plans had not been reviewed within the required timescales. The service should ensure that personal plans are regularly reviewed by staff with families. This would ensure that all plans reflect children's current needs and progress.

Staff were responsive to children's individual sleep and rest cues. We observed children being sensitively comforted to sleep. Staff offered cuddles, quiet time and read stories in a cosy area when children showed signs of tiredness. As a result children were well-rested, happy and relaxed.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and engaged in play and learning experiences throughout our visit. We saw children self-selecting resources to enrich their play, laughing and having fun. As a result, children were confident in leading their own play and learning.

Planning approaches had recently been reviewed to become more responsive to children's individual interests and experiences. The management team discussed their plans to support staff to embed the new planning approaches, and to continue developing their online learning journals. We agreed that this would clearly monitor all children's progress and discussed linking children's observations more closely to planning and their next steps. This would clearly evidence children's voices and support them to reach their full potential.

Staff were beginning to introduce provocations and invitations to play, this involves providing experiences that invite children to play in a creative way without a pre-planned direction. This supported children to experience a balance of spontaneous and intentional learning experiences. It had been identified that some staff would benefit from training opportunities to develop their skills in effective questioning, these are questions that encourage children to form ideas. This would ensure that all staff were skilled in supporting

children to develop their problem solving skills and add depth to their learning.

Children had fun whilst engaging in rich holistic play opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills throughout the indoor and outdoor environment. We observed children in the outdoor woodland area collecting pea pods and estimating how many peas would be in each one. They excitedly opened their pea pods and counted their peas to see if they were right. Children also had fun measuring sun flowers they had grown identifying which ones were the biggest and the smallest. Parents spoke highly of the outdoor woodland area, one parent stated, "They go outside to learn all about wildlife and nature. They also learn about different textures, numbers and colours." Children had weekly timetabled access to this area. We suggested considering ways to incorporating similar play and learning experiences within the playroom outdoor space. This would enable children to revisit and build on play and learning experiences daily.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a homely and welcoming environment. Playrooms were well ventilated and furnished to a high standard. Due to the layout of the playroom one area did not get as much natural light as the rest of the room. This had been carefully considered and developed into a home area with lamps and fairy lights to create a cosy space with soft lighting. We observed children relaxing and chatting together on comfortable chairs with blankets. As a result, children were comfortable and happy in their environment.

Open play spaces had been very well designed to include plenty of real resources and loose parts, these are materials with no specific purpose that can be used in multiple ways. This stimulated children's imagination, curiosity and linked their play and learning to real life experiences. One parent told us, "Every time we go there is something exciting for my child to explore." We observed children moving around the room freely, independently accessing exciting play spaces that had been designed to spark their interests. This gave children a sense of ownership of their environment and encouraged self-directed play.

Staff passionately promoted the importance of outdoor play in all weather. Staff told us, "The nursery is a warm, nurturing and welcoming environment with a fantastic outdoor learning area that strives to give children the best outcomes." Children enjoyed free flow access to fully enclosed outdoor play spaces as well as weekly access to a large outdoor woodland area within the school grounds. This supported children to be active and had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. The woodland area had been gradually developed with children to provide a variety of rich play spaces. These incorporated a very good range of resources that promoted numeracy, literacy and science in a natural environment. One parent told us, "The outdoor classroom is perfect for my child who likes playing in the mud kitchen and being outside." Another parent stated, "The outside play area is fantastic, getting the kids out together has helped my child get over some fears of bugs, they are always singing the little songs." During our visit we saw children looking for tadpoles and insects, excitedly showing us what they had found and telling us what they had learned. As a result, children experienced valuable opportunities to explore and discover in nature. We observed children balancing over bridges, jumping in mud, climbing and sliding down hills. Children were confident in assessing and managing their own risks. As a result, children were developing their physical and gross motor skills whilst learning about their own limits.

The environment was clean and well-maintained. Maintenance and repair procedures were in place and children's information was stored securely in the office. Staff had a good knowledge of infection prevention and control procedures, this minimised the risk of infection. This ensured that children experienced an environment that was clean and safe.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The management team were relatively new to the role. They welcomed the inspection as a development opportunity and demonstrated a positive attitude towards change and improvement. It was clear to us that children and families were at the heart of the service and their plans for improvement.

A joint school and early years improvement plan was in place which identified key areas for development. The establishment priorities centred around raising attainment in literacy and numeracy along with reducing the cost of the school day. We could see the positive impact of these priorities in the early years playrooms, this promoted positive outcomes for children and families.

The management team discussed their plans to develop an additional plan to clearly reflect the early years improvement journey. Staff were in the early stages of self-evaluation to inform this plan. All staff felt included in the process. Staff told us, "The management are approachable they listen to our suggestions and requests. We are encouraged to develop ourselves with training and leadership opportunities and encouraged to be part of the whole school and village." As a result, staff felt valued and listened to.

Families views had been sought through questionnaires and plans were in place to implement some of their suggestions. Some families told us that they would like more opportunities to be involved in the service. The service planned to develop more methods of gathering and sharing feedback with families. This would ensure that all families feel included and supported to influence change in the service.

Some auditing and monitoring systems were in place, these were not always effective. We found some gaps and inconsistencies in the recording of information, such as medication records where verbal updates had not been recorded. These were rectified prior to the conclusion of the inspection. We discussed the importance of implementing robust, consistent quality assurance systems. These would support the management team to ensure that all written records are completed in full and reflect children's current needs. (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure robust auditing and monitoring systems are developed in line with relevant best practice guidance. This should include but is not limited to medication management, personal planning and accident/incident records.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance systems' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

The service had experienced recent changes in the staff and management team. Management had recognised the importance of developing positive relationships and a collaborative ethos. One staff member told us, "I feel my wellbeing is supported by all staff within the centre due to their natural warm and caring nature. I know they would support me in all aspects of work." During our visit, staff were kind and respectful, offering help to each other when required. All parents spoke positively of the staff team, one parent described the staff as, "Friendly, understanding and most importantly you can see they care." As a result, staff felt well supported and had formed strong, caring relationships with children, families and each other.

Staff benefitted from regular opportunities to meet as a whole staff team. Staff told us "We have weekly team meetings to check in with all staff and discuss how everything is going in the Nursery. We have a wellbeing wall where staff are encouraged to praise each other or just put a little uplifting message up. We also have an anonymous buddy that is encouraged to leave us a small gift or card if they notice we need a little boost." This supported good communication across the team and ensured that all staff felt valued and included. There was a mixture of staff experience, knowledge and skills. Staff spoke positively of each other's strengths and were keen to learn from each other. This supported staff to develop their practice to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

The service was appropriately staffed during most of our inspection. The staff team worked well together sharing tasks throughout the day and communicating children's whereabouts effectively. As a result children were safely supervised. At times during staff breaks and lunchtime, staff were not able to meet all children's needs at the right time. We discussed the importance of planning staff cover and busy periods of the day effectively to minimise any impact on the quality of children's experiences. Improvements were made to the staff deployment during lunchtime prior to the end of our inspection.

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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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