Cherry Trees Early Childhood Centre
Day Care of Children

The Barony Campus
Auchinleck Road
Cumnock
KA18 1FQ

Telephone: 01290 427 299

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 January 2024

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2003016952

About the service

Cherry Trees Early Childhood Centre is located within Barony Campus in the town of Cumnock. The centre can provide a care service for up to 119 children over two years of age until they start primary school, no more than 15 of whom are aged 2 years to under 3 years and no more than 104 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

The head of centre maintains overall responsibility for the centre, and the centre employs a deputy manager and two senior practitioners.

Cherry Trees Early Childhood Centre is close to local amenities, green spaces, parks, and transport links. Children have access to 2 playrooms, a quiet room, an enclosed garden, designated nursery toilets and use of two flexible rooms.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place on Monday 29 January 2024 between 09:45 and 16:00 hours, and Tuesday, 30 January 2024 between 10:00 and 16:00 hours. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about the 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 practice and daily life;
- spoke with children using the service;
- reviewed documents;
- spoke with the manager and staff;
- emailed parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

Children benefitted from positive attachments with staff.

Children had opportunities to have fun and lead their play and learning.

The service should continue with plans to improve the outdoor space.

The management and staff team were committed to delivering a quality service for children and families.

Children benefitted from a staff team with a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience.

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?	4 - 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 and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support.

Overall, children were happy and settled. Staff were kind, warm and nurturing and children were confident in approaching staff for comfort. One parent commented, "The staff are very warm and welcoming and always support my child". This supported children to feel secure and loved.

Staff knew children well. Personal care plans were in place for each child and updated every six months with families. Review sheets were created for each child, which staff used to record achievements and changes in support needs. Staff should continue to develop their skills in observing children's progress and identifying relevant next steps in learning. This would ensure care and support is provided to meet the children's needs.

Good systems were in place to support children with identified additional needs. Wellbeing plans supported staff, parents and specialist agencies to identify and agree on targets. This supported an inclusive approach to learning for each individual child.

Children benefitted from positive attachments with staff. Children were relaxed and comfortable. We observed children inviting staff into their play. For example, children outdoors actively sought out staff to join them in exploring the mud kitchen. We saw children confidently approach staff for cuddles, comfort and affection. One parent told us, "Kind, friendly staff have gone above and beyond to provide a fantastic service to my son".

Children were kept safe and well. Medication was stored securely, and most medication records were accurately completed. We identified one medication record that had not been clearly updated; the management team immediately rectified this. Accidents and incidents were recorded and appropriately shared with parents. These processes supported children's overall wellbeing.

Children experienced mealtimes that were calm and unhurried. All children benefitted as staff sat with them and engaged in meaningful conversations about their day. There were opportunities for children to be independent. For example, children poured their own drinks at snack and expressed their choice. This contributed to a positive mealtime experience.

Staff used a variety of methods that supported good communication with parents, for example, learning journals, newsletters and the school app. Whilst most parents agreed that communication with the service was a strength, a few parents felt this could be further improved. Parents commented, "The Safer Schools Scotland app could be updated more frequently regarding dates surrounding holidays etc. The app itself is terrible but that's not the nursery's fault." and "Slightly more personalised comments to better understand specifically how my own child is progressing". We discussed this with the manager, who advised that they would consider this.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning.

Children had opportunities to have fun and lead their own play and learning. We observed children enjoying

time with friends in the garden, self-selecting experiences and engaging in games, role play and songs. One staff member told us, "Children have free flow play to both indoor and outdoor areas. Children's interests and ideas are at the heart of planning for experiences." This supported children to learn in a context that was meaningful to them.

Children had opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, staff regularly provided experiences that included patterns, shapes and shape recognition. Within learning zones, a range of books were available for children, and staff promoted experiences that supported rhyming indoors and outside, such as 'rhyme of the month'.

Children benefitted from a staff team who were responsive in their approach to planning experiences. Planning approaches were child-centred and took account of children's individual needs and interests. Some observations were well written, highlighted individual children's achievements, and supported staff to identify possible lines of development. The team had been working on this area and will continue to do so. This will ensure children are supported to actively lead their own play and learning.

Staff had an understanding of 'schematic play', which is repeated patterns of behaviours that children display and learn through during freely chosen play. Staff offered children opportunities to explore their schemas and develop new skills, for example, through posting and transporting objects. This meant children were supported in their development through play and exploration.

How good is our setting? 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.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities.

Children benefitted from play spaces that were bright, clean and well ventilated. Cosy, quiet spaces were available for children to rest, and safe spaces were provided for children to self-regulate their emotions. A sensory area between the two rooms allowed children to explore and develop their curiosity skills.

Play spaces for children were welcoming and inviting and provided them with ample space to play. Staff spoke about using the national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being me' when setting up play zones, which were reflective of children's current interests. This was evident through discussions with, and observations of children, especially in the creative area.

Children's health and wellbeing were supported through free-flow access to the outdoors. This supported them to access fresh air and exercise. Staff discussed that, although children in the 2-3 rooms had free flow access, due to the colder temperatures at the time of year, this was managed by staff observing children's cues and offering regular outdoor opportunities.

The outdoor space needed to be developed to enhance children's outdoor play experiences. Management and staff had identified this as an area for improvement. Children had been part of the process of planning what they would like, for example, planters to grow plants in, dens and bikes. This will support energetic play and learning.

Overall, effective infection prevention and control (IPC) measures were in place to keep children safe. Staff should be mindful of ensuring that children wash their hands after touching bins. To ensure consistency in

IPC measures, the manager should continue to undertake quality assurance with a focus on hand hygiene. This will support staff to embed best practice and maintain a safe environment for children.

Systems were in place to support staff to keep children safe. Risk assessments were completed and reviewed regularly by the manager and staff team.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The management and staff team were committed to delivering a quality service for children and families. It was evident through discussions that the management team were enthusiastic about improving and worked closely with staff to ensure their understanding. One staff member told us, "Staff have great relationships and work well helping each other." This contributed to an inclusive ethos where staff felt valued.

The management team engaged well during the inspection process and were receptive to our ideas and suggestions. The management team had made some changes as a result of our suggestions before the conclusion of the inspection. This supported a culture of continual improvement.

An improvement plan was in place and reflective of the setting's current development needs. Children had been consulted on where they would like improvements, and these had been included. We could see some evidence of planned action having taken place, for example, increased opportunities for parental engagement and the positive impact this had on the children.

Staff members had started evaluating their performance using Education Scotland's practice document, 'How good is our early learning and childcare'.Although they were still at an early stage of developing their skills in relation to self-evaluation, they worked closely with the local authority to improve their practices and provide better learning experiences for children. We encouraged staff to continue this positive partnership and engage in reflective discussions to ensure they maintain a good standard of play and learning opportunities for children.

Leaders and staff were committed to making and sustaining improvements in the service. The service had implemented a quality assurance system that monitored children's information, communication, and involvement with families, as well as the practices and provisions within the service. This resulted in a more consistent approach and clearer expectations for staff, which would lead to better outcomes for the children.

Staff leadership roles were in the early stages of being developed. Staff had been consulted on their roles, resulting in plans for staff to lead initiatives and programmes they were passionate about. For example, identified champion roles in communication and nurture will benefit children and support staff to provide breadth and depth of these experiences across the service.

One staff member shared, "The new manager is actually a breath of fresh air. Very professional in all that she does, an inspiration to us all".

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff had developed good working relationships with each other, and they worked well together. One staff member commented, " We are very supportive of one another, especially within our roles, and respect each other throughout". This supported a culture of collaborative and respectful working.

The deployment of staff within identified learning zones supported staff to work together to ensure children were cared for safely. The management team were available to support staff throughout the day. This allowed for continuity of care for children and promoted positive relationships as children had the opportunity to build relationships with all staff.

Staff regularly met with the management team to discuss their professional development. All staff felt professionally and personally supported by the manager. This supported staff to feel included and helped them to develop their skills and knowledge.

Children benefitted from a staff team with a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience. Staff worked together and role-modelled good practice. This supported newer staff members to learn from each other and promoted positive outcomes for children and their families.

Staff had undertaken some recent training opportunities relevant to their role. These included autism awareness and understanding child-centred planning. The manager should continue to monitor staff practice in relation to training to ensure this positively impacts experiences and outcomes for children and families.

The service was impacted by a significant level of staff absences and vacancies, which led to the provision of a reduced service for children. Families had been kept informed about this. The service had plans in place, including staff recruitment, to ensure that children and families would be able to fully access their entitled provision as soon as possible.

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

The manager and staff should review lunch time arrangements. The revised arrangements will ensure children have opportunities for high-quality social engagement and learning social skills in a calm and relaxed environment in small groups at a time.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which

state that:
'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2022.

Action taken since then
Children's experiences at mealtimes had improved and we observed that all children enjoyed a relaxing mealtime which supported individual allergies and food preferences to be considered. Staff were well positioned to act promptly should a chocking episode occur.
Overall positive improvements were observed which supported children's wellbeing, therefore, this area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Outcomes for children should be improved through the development of staff engagement and planning that broadens opportunities and adds depth to all aspects of children's play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2022.

Action taken since then
New Planning processes had been introduced and developed, which has led to improvements. Staff have benefited from training in best practice guidance, such as 'Realising the ambition'.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The manager should ensure an area is developed to offer space for children to have a restful time or sleep, ensuring it gives children privacy and dignity.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'My care and support meet my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2022.

Action taken since then
Staff have made progress in this area and were supporting children to sleep in area which offered privacy and dignity. Children were monitored during sleep and recording their sleep routines which was shared with parents at the end of the day.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 4

The manager and staff should take action to reduce the risk of infection spreading and ensure children experience a safe environment. In order to achieve this, they should:

Enable staff to have time to support children to understand and implement good handwashing practices.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'My environment is safe and secure' (HSCS 5.17).

This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2022.

Action taken since then

We observed good infection prevention control practices through the service staff, and children washing their hands before and after lunch and also after the children had wiped their noses. We discussed where further improvements could be made by staff paying more attention when they touch the bin to ensure they wash their hand straight after.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 5

The service should continue to consolidate the format for children's personal plans, ensuring that all staff understands how to meaningfully assess children's individual needs, choices and wishes. The management team should audit and work with staff to monitor children's personal plans and ensure the best outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'My future care and support needs are anticipated as part of my assessment' (HSCS 1.14); and
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2022.

Action taken since then

All children accessing the service had personal plans in place. The service, with support from the Early Years team, are continuing to develop the personal plans and link this to their online learning journals to highlight children's individual next steps. The management team are responsible for three monthly monitoring of personal plans to ensure consistency and continuity in recording next steps and achievements throughout the team.

We have encouraged the service to continue to embed and sustain the new practices, and processes to ensure children's needs are fully supported in the setting.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 6

To ensure children receive quality early learning experiences, the provider, manager and staff should ensure effective quality assurance systems are developed and implemented to improve outcomes for children. At a minimum, they should ensure:

a) Views are routinely sought from children, staff, and parents on aspects of the service and that their views are used to inform improvement planning.

b) Self-evaluation processes are developed and include but are not limited to the introduction of formal systems that support reflective practice across the setting.

c) Monitoring of staff practice is routinely carried out and imbedded to identify strengths and any areas for further improvement.

d) Monitoring of the environment is routinely carried out and imbedded to identify strengths and any areas for further improvement.

e) Monitoring of any maintenance and repairs to ensure they are carried out without delays.

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

This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2022.

Action taken since then

An improvement plan, quality assurance, self-evaluation and monitoring of staff practice, maintenance, environment processes had been introduced and had led to improvements impact on the service. Children, parents and staff were fully involved in the processes.

This area for improvement is 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

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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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

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.