Forehill Early Years Centre
Day Care of Children

24 Cessnock Place
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Telephone: 01292 612 461

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 March 2023

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003017396

About the service

Forehill Early Years Centre is located in Ayr, South Ayrshire. It is on land adjacent to Forehill 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 130 children aged from two years old to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 20 will be 2 to 3 years only.

Children aged 3-5 years have access to a very large, bright playroom and a secure outdoor space. Children aged 2-3 years have access to a smaller, cosy but bright playroom. All children can at times throughout the day freely move between indoors and outdoors. The centre is located within walking distance of local shops, parks and amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 and 7 March 2023 between 9:30 and 16:00. We gave feedback to the service onsite on 13 March 2023 at 11:00. 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 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 12 responses
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were having lots of fun and enjoying the resources and experiences available.
- Staff and the management team placed children, and their families, at the heart of the early years centre.
- Children experienced warmth and caring approaches from staff.
- Children could freely access outdoors at times through the day.
- Leadership was of a high quality and had a positive impact on the outcomes for Forehill children and families.
- Children benefitted from a high quality staff team that were creative, skilled, knowledgeable and committed to the continuous development of the service.
- High quality self evaluation methods ensured improvements to children's experiences.

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were nurtured and cared for by a responsive staff team who knew each of them very well. We saw children being respected and praised throughout their day. As a result, we saw confident children enjoying the early years environment.

Care routines were individual to children's needs and were delivered with kindness and compassion. It was evident that positive relationships between staff, children and their families had been established. Parents described staff as "welcoming and nurturing." One parent said, "I feel my family and the nursery are all working together and in unison and we are always listened to." As a result, children felt loved and secure as their overall wellbeing was supported, and their needs were being met.

Nutritious snacks and lunches were provided by the service. We saw some outstanding areas of practice during the lunch period where children were fully involved in the whole mealtime experience and the development of children's independence and life skills was embedded within practice. Water was freely available throughout the day. Although lunch times were busy, we observed them to be enjoyable, unhurried and calm. A member of staff sat with each small group and chatted as they ate. This ensured children were safe and provided a positive, caring social experience where children felt valued.

Children were well-supported in the indoor and outdoor environment by staff who knew about nurturing principles and delivered them calmly and with warmth. Staff engagement with children was child-centred; this contributed to a settled environment. One parent told us: "The staff are just amazing. I walked in one day to my child's support worker cuddling them ... not just a cuddle but a proper, caring, lovely, kind-hearted cuddle." Care was taken by staff to ensure that they communicated with children in a respectful manner. We saw this reciprocated in child to staff and child to child interactions. This meant that children were respected, included and confident.

We observed staff offering personalised support to all children, including those that required additional support. Staff had been supported to develop their own skills, knowledge and learning to adopt strategies and tools to support every child. We noted a very high level of support provided to families. This included working with a range of other professionals to motivate families to adopt a more wholesome nutritional diet, educating families about play and how they can build on this at home, supporting families through PEEP (Parent Early Education Partnership) session and accessing professional service onsite in the centre.

Staff told us about effective partnership working with South Ayrshire Library Service, where children's exploration and enjoyment of books was encouraged. Whilst we did not see this during our inspection visit, staff were very enthusiastic about the positive outcomes this would have for children.

Children's personal plans were in place. Whilst the plans included aspirations for children's attainment and a celebration of their achievements, continued consideration of children's health, safety and welfare needs would strengthen the setting's child-centred approach to care and learning.

Drop off and pick up was done through the enclosed outdoor area. Although this system worked well, and parents told us they felt "it was a safe and secure way" to collect and deliver their children this limited the experiences for children staying all day. We asked the management team to consider how transition times could be reviewed to ensure that they continue to offer enriched outdoor experiences for children who stay for extended sessions. We noted that the structure of the day occasionally interrupted children's freely chosen play experiences. We asked the management team to review this.

The service had developed powerful strategies to underpin Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the wellbeing indictors with children. We saw examples of knitted puppets, floor books and wall displays to support children in their understanding of wellbeing.

Accident and incident records were in place; these should be developed to ensure that they comply with up-to-date General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. Parents should sign and date accident and incident forms to acknowledge they are aware of any potential impact on their child.

1.3 Play and learning

Children had opportunities to be happy and have fun. Children were busy and engaged in leading their play and learning throughout our visit. They benefited from a skilled staff team who were responsive and planned high quality play experiences, which promoted children's choice based on their interests.

There was a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences. This was supported by staff who scaffolded and used effective questioning to extend children's thinking, encouraged language development and supported children to consolidate their learning. We could see that children felt safe and secure. As a result, children were progressing well and were happy and confident.

Planning for children's play and learning was child-centred and responsive to their interests. Carefully considered observations of children's learning, and their progress, were recorded and shared with families through Brilliant Books. Children were keen to share their Brilliant Books with us and they could talk about them with us. They were well-kept and meaningful to each child. One parent told us: "My child has a Brilliant Book with examples of his learning and photos which is sent home for us to look at throughout the year."

Staff used the observations to plan opportunities to extend children's learning. This ensured play and learning experiences provided met children's needs and engaged their interests, which resulted in children having fun and achieving their potential. A family shared with us that they liked '... the great amount of fab things for the children to do and they have different staff who enjoy different things so I feel the children get a great variety."

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment where they could play and learn. The well-maintained, open plan playroom was furnished to a high standard with lots of natural light and ventilation. Restful, quiet areas in the rooms had been considered to offer children space to rest and relax

during the day. Children were confident moving around the spaces available, both indoors and in the enclosed outdoor spaces. One child told us, "I like nursery, I like it a lot." Another said, "I like going outside, we can go outside when we want." This supported children to lead their own play and have fun with their friends.

Staff had a very good understanding of the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall wellbeing. Children in the 3-5 year old room benefited from free flow access to the nursery outdoor area most of the day. Children in the 2 year old room were supported to have daily access to the outdoor area. The outdoor area had been thoughtfully developed to offer choice and challenge, appropriate to children's age and stage of development. One parent commented, "I feel the outdoor area provided a whole host of play ideas and keeps my child entertained and happy."

The service also made very good use of the rich, natural environment offered within the local community. This provided children with many opportunities to explore and further develop their gross motor skills. Outdoor experiences meant children were learning about the benefits of an active lifestyle that promoted their health and wellbeing.

We observed one child, leaving with their parent at the end of the session, opening and closing the outside gate. We asked the management team to further assess this and consider alternate safety measures to ensure a child cannot leave the service unattended. The management team had contacted the service provider to address this, before the completion of the inspection visit.

Other risk assessments were in place that ensured that children's safety was promoted as potential risks had been minimised, without compromising activities. One parent told us "I have seen them in winter playing outside even when it is dark which I was pleased to see."

Staff had a good understanding of children's individual dietary requirements and allergies which resulted in safe food practices. Infection prevention and control routines were embedded and further supported a safe environment. The playroom was well-ventilated throughout the day. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times, children were supported by innovative methods. Regular cleaning procedures meant that the spread of infection was kept to a minimum.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The service had been expanded considerably since the previous inspection visit. This had been done sensitively and effectively. The management team had been involved in all decision-making for the expansion. This had ensured that the continuity of a high quality service had continued throughout the move.

The vision, values and aims for the setting were clear and focused on improvement. The management team promoted a setting that reflected the aspirations of Forehill children, families, partners and the wider community. This ensured positive outcomes for all. Strong leadership supported staff to develop confidence and knowledge to take on lead roles. Staff spoke confidently of leadership roles that had been devolved to them. As a result, there were rich learning experiences for children.

The enthusiastic staff team felt valued and was committed to delivering high quality experiences for children and families. The positive ethos meant staff were proactive in taking shared responsibility for change. This ensured children benefited from a staff team who were motivated and responsive to meeting their needs.

The service had created an improvement plan based on priorities identified by the management and staff team. Children and their families had been meaningfully involved in the improvement planning process. Effective policies, procedures and quality assurance processes were in place, and also supported the development of the service. Staff recognised the important part they each played in meeting the needs of children and families.

Regular staff meetings supported staff to have high aspirations for the service. They also provided opportunities for staff to reflect together and share information to support children's learning and overall wellbeing. Consideration had been given to the timing of meetings and minutes were recorded to ensure all staff were involved. This ensured a clear and consistent approach was effectively communicated.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff knew children and their families very well. Secure relationships between them were evident in the kind and compassionate interactions we observed. Parents told us that staff were supportive, approachable, professional and loving. One parent shared with us, "All staff seem to enjoy working there and their enthusiasm and love of their job comes across." Whilst another commented: "It is very clear that this is far more than just a job role to these people." This meant that children felt safe, secure and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported them.

Staff had accessed a rich range of training and support. As a result children benefited from a high quality staff team. Effective use was made of staff knowledge and skills to ensure children's experiences were positive. Staff communicated very well with each other and worked together to keep children safe and engaged in quality experiences. This meant that key tasks and responsibilities could be carried out whilst ensuring continued positive outcomes for children.

Staffing levels within the service offered opportunities for staff to support smaller groups of children. There were times that smaller groups of children accessed quieter areas of the centre to focus on specific tasks or learning. The management team was creative and ambitious in their approach to staff deployment. They recognised that staffing levels, skills and expertise within the setting provided them with opportunities to further enhance the service. This contributed to staff being satisfied and motivated in their work and provided continuity of care for children from a committed and passionate staff team.

Staff wellbeing was a priority for the management team. An open door policy, one-to-one meetings and annual appraisals meant staff felt valued, supported and listened to. The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. Staff were flexible and breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children whilst making sure staff had time to rest and be refreshed.

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

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