Inchlair Early Learning and Childcare Centre
Day Care of Children

Valeview
Stenhousemuir
Larbert
FK5 3BY

Telephone: 01324 503 430

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 January 2024

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003043657

About the service

Inchlair Early Learning and Childcare Centre is a daycare of children service which is provided by Falkirk Council. The service is situated in a residential area of Stenhousemuir. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 120 children aged two years to those not yet attending primary school, at any one time. Of whom no more than 40 are aged two years to under three years.

The service has two separate playrooms to accommodate the different age groups of children. The large playrooms have been thoughtfully organised to offer children space to play, explore, rest and relax. Each of the playrooms provide children with toileting and nappy changing facilities. Children benefit from direct free-flow access to enclosed outdoor spaces.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 23 January 2024 and Wednesday 24 January 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 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 children in the service
- reviewed digital responses from 23 families
- spoke to nine families in person
- spoke with one parent by telephone
- spoke with other professionals involved with the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from high quality and very well considered play and learning opportunities.
- Playrooms were spacious and very well resourced.
- Children experienced a setting that was welcoming, comfortable and furnished to a very high standard.
- Children had free flow access to large, enclosed outdoor areas.
- Children were progressing well and having fun as they developed skills supporting them to fulfil their potential
- The ambitious management and staff team were committed to delivering a high quality service for children and families.

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.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support
Children experienced a warm, compassionate and nurturing approach from a very caring staff team. Staff knew children and families well and as a result were able to offer appropriate care and support to individuals. They understood the importance of developing secure and positive relationships with children and families. Families described staff as "amazing, fantastic, supportive and friendly." They told us that staff go "above and beyond for children." It was evident in the interactions we observed that strong attachments had been formed. This meant that children's emotional wellbeing was supported, and their needs were being met.

We observed some children helping to prepare snack for their friends. They were supported to learn important life skills as they carefully chopped fruit and chatted about healthy eating options.

Mealtimes were a mostly relaxed and unhurried experience. Children's play and learning opportunities were uninterrupted as they could choose to eat when they were ready. We witnessed children developing independence skills as they collected crockery, selected their food and poured their drinks. Children were kept safe as staff were close by, or sitting with them, as they ate. Younger children were supported with warmth and encouragement to develop confidence as they learned skills to become independent. For example, as they used cutlery. Most staff sat with children throughout lunchtime. The service recognised daily routines as a rich opportunity to further promote close attachments and provide a positive social experience for children.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Staff gathered the views of children and families during home visits before children started at the setting. Families told us this was beneficial as they got to know staff too. One parent shared how delighted they had been as their children were encouraged to share their views when staff visited them at home. Plans were updated regularly with children and families. As a result, staff could respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in children's lives. This supported strong relationships and meant children experienced a consistent and continuous approach to their care.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning
Children benefitted from high quality and very well considered play and learning opportunities. The skilled staff team supported children to extend their thinking and consolidate their learning through the use of effective questioning. Observations of children's interests were used by the staff team to inform planning. Staff told us, "Planning is child led with children's wellbeing at the heart." They also said, "Children learn best from real life experiences." A creative approach, rich provocations and interesting prompts engaged children's imagination and supported them to learn and develop new skills.

The staff team gave careful thought and consideration to the needs of individuals, as well as children's age and stage of development. For example, staff explained how they had provided pre-woodworking experiences to ensure all children could access learning opportunities. The responsive style of the dedicated and skilled staff team enabled children to meaningfully lead their learning and follow their interests. As a

result, children were progressing well and having fun as they developed skills supporting them to fulfil their potential.

High quality observations documented children's learning and were shared through floorbooks in each area, and within children's individual learning folders. One family told us, "I love how the staff take my child's interests forward and it's reflected through their learning journey." Some families told us that they would appreciate more information about their child's daily experiences. This feedback was shared with the service to contribute to their development plan.

Families were warmly welcomed into the setting and invited to join in with their child's play and learning experiences. They told us that they really enjoyed sessions such as PEEP, Stay and Bake, and Stay and Sew. One parent told us how they had learned new skills during the Stay and Sew session. They said that they now felt confident in doing this at home with their child. This meant that children's confidence and self-esteem was increasing as they developed a broad range of lifelong learning skills.

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities
Children experienced a setting that was welcoming, comfortable and furnished to a very high standard. The entrance and cloakroom areas were laid out in a way that immediately gave children and families a sense of belonging. The organised and well considered playrooms were spacious and very well resourced. They offered children cosy spaces to rest and relax as well as areas to have fun exploring, creating and investigating. This gave a strong message to children that they matter.

Children's choice was promoted as they benefitted from free flow access to large and enclosed garden areas throughout the day. They were supported and encouraged to develop independence and self help skills as they changed into appropriate outdoor clothing. This ensured children were warm and dry as they enjoyed active play and explored the nursery garden in all weathers. Staff shared with us their plans and desire to develop outdoor spaces further. For example, offering more opportunities for planting and growing in the garden. Children told us they liked to play outside with their friends. They showed us the dens they had built and were excited to demonstrate how fast they could run. As a result, children's health and wellbeing was promoted as they learned the importance of an active lifestyle.

The setting was clean, organised and well maintained. Staff understood the arrangements for, and the importance of, cleaning within the service. The playroom was ventilated throughout the day and offered children lots of natural light. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at most key times. To further enhance infection prevention and control measures, we discussed ways to support children's handwashing outdoors.

Risk assessments ensured that children's safety was promoted as potential risks had been minimised. We discussed how the service could develop these further by including children in the process and considering benefit/risk approach.

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.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well
The ambitious management and staff team were committed to delivering a high quality service for children and families. They had a shared vision which was evident in the nurturing, responsive and inclusive interactions we witnessed during our visit.

Staff were passionate about their role and recognised the important part they played in getting it right for children and families. One member of staff told us, "We all want to be the best practitioners we can be." Another said, "children and families are at the heart of all we do." Most staff had undertaken Froebel training and worked together to share their skills and knowledge. Leadership opportunities for staff developed their confidence further, as they understood the impact of this on improving outcomes for children. The positive ethos and strong leadership supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their abilities. As a result, children benefitted from a dedicated staff team who were motivated and responsive to meeting their needs.

Managers protected time to ensure staff had the opportunity to meet in their huddles and come together throughout the week. Consideration had been given to staff shifts and working patterns. This ensured all staff were included and everyone could contribute and share information. These meetings also provided opportunities for the team to reflect and evaluate what was working well and identify further improvements. This meant children's needs were being understood and could be supported and met by all staff.

Effective policies, procedures and informal quality assurance processes were in place, and supported the development of the service. Formal self-evaluation was under review. However, we found managers and staff to be very reflective in their practice. They took opportunities to reflect in the moment, adapt and make changes where necessary. To further promote partnership working we discussed ways to include the views of children and families in future improvement planning. This would ensure they were meaningfully involved in the development of the service and the culture of continuous improvement further promoted.

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.

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment
Staff knowledge and skills were used effectively to ensure children's experiences were positive. Staff communicated very well with each other. They worked together to keep children safe and engaged in quality play and learning opportunities. They were proactive when anticipating where and when support might be needed. This created a respectful atmosphere which ensured children were appropriately supported throughout the day.

The staff team were committed to their own continual professional development, as many of them had undertaken additional training and learning. They clearly understood that children's experiences and outcomes improved as they developed their own knowledge and understanding.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring 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.

Staff wellbeing was a priority for the management team. They made time to meet with staff regularly. Staff told us that as a result they had a positive relationship with the managers and felt valued and listened to. This meant children experienced continuity of care from a committed and passionate staff team.

Staff knew children well and secure relationships between them had been established. One family told us, "The whole team are genuinely kind, caring and interested in our children, and our family as a whole. We feel cared for, supported and our views valued by this early years team." Another parent said, "They are friendly and approachable. My child has developed some really strong bonds with the staff." This meant that children felt safe, secure and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported 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?	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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