Loanhead primary school and early childhood centre
Day Care of Children

Loanhead Street
Kilmarnock
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Telephone: 01563 522938

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 May 2023

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2021000026

About the service

Loanhead Primary and Early Childhood Centre is a Daycare of Children service provided by East Ayrshire Council. The service is based in the town of Kilmarnock and is provided from purpose-built facilities on one level. Playrooms have direct access to an outdoor play area, and children can choose whether to play indoors or outside, almost all of the time. The service is close to a range of amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 May between 09:30 and 17:00. 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 registration. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with children using the service.
- Considered written information provided by eight families.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents and spoke with a visiting professional.

Key messages

• Management and staff placed children at the heart of their work, ensuring they felt loved, happy and well supported.

• Children were having fun and making lots of choices about their own play and learning.

• An enthusiastic and motivated management and staff team worked well together to develop the service.

• Children were cared for in a bright, spacious environment.

• Self-evaluation and improvement planning should now be further developed to support the continuous development of the service.

• The range of toys and resources should be reviewed and further developed.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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

1.1 Nurturing care and support.

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

Children were happy, confident and having fun in the setting. They experienced warmth and kindness from staff who supported them to feel loved and valued. Care and learning routines were tailored to children's individual needs and were delivered with kindness and compassion. Staff demonstrated genuine affection, care and concern for the children. One parent told us "It's a lovely welcome, caring, nurturing environment. Which is felt even from the minute I drop my child off. Nothing is a problem. It's a lovely wee place".

The service ensured meals and snacks reflected children's individual dietary needs and preferences. A parent told us: "Management and staff have been so supportive and understanding of our child's needs. They are so nurturing and communicate regarding our child's well-being constantly". Children were involved in the preparation of snack and supported to use serving utensils and cutlery during lunch time. This was helping them develop skills for life. A selection of food was available for children to choose on each table. This encouraged children to try new food and respected their right to make choices. Children enjoyed a sociable, calm and relaxed meal on the day of our inspection. Staff sat with their key groups of children at lunchtime. They shared a meal with children which helped model good habits and promoted a homely feel.

Personal planning reflected the holistic needs of each child to support their wellbeing. Staff recognised the value of involving children and their families in making decisions about their care and development and effectively involved them in identifying appropriate targets. Children were involved in celebrating their achievements, which helped them to have positive self-esteem and to be enthusiastic learners.

Positive relationships with families underpinned effective partnership arrangements. A parent told us: "I collaborate regularly with my child's teacher to form their care plan. I understand SHANARRI because my child's teacher taught me about these during the planning". This was helping families to support children to achieve their targets out-with the centre. Effective approaches supported families to access additional support from external agencies if required. As a result, all children were supported to achieve their potential.

Policies and procedures relating to the management of medication, accidents and incidents promoted children's health and well-being.

Staff had a sound understanding of child protection procedures. This helped to ensure children were safeguarded and protected from harm.

1.3 Play and learning

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

We focused on children's right to play, have fun, experience joy and the resulting impact this had on their learning and development.

Staff skilfully and enthusiastically interacted with children during play, supporting and extending their learning. They offered suggestions and asked questions that developed children's thinking. Children told us, "I like playing with all of the ladies".

Staff supported children's current interests and curiosities to promote their learning and development. Children were engaged in play experiences for prolonged periods of time showing high levels of concentration and excitement. Children could make choices about where they wished to play and who with. Staff were responsive to their interests, and supported them to develop their ideas, for example, experimenting with water to find ways to change its colour.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interests and life experiences. Consequently, children were having fun and progressing in their learning. All parents strongly agreed that their child had opportunities to be involved in meaningful, interesting and fun play experiences. One parent told us: "All play is child led and most activities come from children's interests.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

We made an evaluation of good for this theme, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

We focused on the physical environment where children were cared for, ensuring that the environment was appropriate with good quality furnishings and equipment.

Children were cared for in new, purpose-built premises which were furnished to a high standard. Playrooms were well ventilated, bright and provided a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment for children. Spaces were organised to reflect children's interests and provided easily accessible toys and materials that supported play and learning. Children could choose to play indoors or in the outdoor area for most of every day. This promoted children's choices and enhanced their emotional and physical well-being.

Children were keen to show us and tell us about their favourite places to play. They told us, "I like to colour in and play with my friends. I like the mud kitchen and I like it outside when the sun comes", "I like the blocks and Lego. I can build some homes". Parents were very happy with the environment, A parent commented "The setting is brilliant. Loads of interesting activities and it's such a safe and comforting space".

Effective systems were in place to manage electronic information in line with general data protection requirements.

The service told us about plans to further develop the range of toys and resources, the outdoor area, and to address some design issues within the premises. These plans with further enhance the quality of the setting.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led.

We made an evaluation of good for this key questions as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Management and staff had worked hard together to develop a high-quality provision for children and their families in this relatively new service. The service's vision, values and aims had been reviewed and developed in consultation with families. These underpinned the service's ethos and aspirations for children.

Staff routinely sought children's views to inform development. This highlighted the value the centre placed on children having a voice. Families were now more routinely involved in the life of the centre and had been taking part in stay and play sessions and enjoying seeing their children's play environment. This provided the opportunity for parents to be more involved in their child's play and learning and for the sharing of information and feedback.

Almost all parents were very happy with the information shared about their children's learning and development. A few told us they would value more information about planned learning experiences for their children and would like to be more involved, for example in attending nativities. Management were developing plans to build on recent developments relating to family engagement to further promote partnership working.

Quality assurance across the service had identified key strengths and areas for improvement, and a range of systems had been developed to support continuous improvement. Leaders were committed to developing staff confidence and skills, empowering them to reflect on practice and to be fully involved in developing the service. Staff felt valued and respected. Plans were in place to further develop approaches to self-evaluation and monitoring. This will support ongoing improvement.

The centre improvement plan, which was currently part of the primary school's, was relevant, and used in practice to contribute to improved outcomes for children. The centre's plans to develop its own improvement plan will support a more focussed approach to planning for improvements that are specific to the centre.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

4.3 Staff deployment.

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

We focussed on how effective the deployment and levels of staff were in ensuring high-quality outcomes for children, how effectively staff supported each other to work as a team to benefit children and how flexible staff were to meet children's needs.

A significant strength of the centre was the commitment to collaborative and flexible working demonstrated by management and staff. This helped to overcome challenges, for example as a result of unplanned absence, and ensured consistently high-quality supervision and experiences for children. A parent told us "The staff are responsive, they know my child well and go the extra mile".

The service was well staffed to meet the needs of children across the day. Careful organisation and deployment ensured that staff were not distracted by tasks and were able to focus their attention on meeting children's needs. As a result, children received consistently responsive care. Staff were attuned to children's needs and responded immediately when they thought support was needed. For example, recognising that a child needed medication or comfort.

The well-being of everyone involved in the centre was at the heart of decision making at all levels. Careful consideration had been given to developing a range of approaches that demonstrated everyone was respected and valued. Effective arrangements also supported good work life balances. This resulted in a positive ethos of attendance within the service.

The effective management team strongly promoted distributed leadership, and staff responded positively, routinely making decisions and adapting their practice to be responsive to the needs of the centre and individual children. Staff worked very well as a team, recognising and learning from each other's strengths and providing support where needed. As a result, staff were happy and motivated in their work, which supported consistently positive experiences for children.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since registration.

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?	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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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