Hurlford & Crookedholm ELCS (SCIO)
Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 June 2023

Service provided by:
Hurlford & Crookedholm Early Learning & Childcare Services (SCIO)

Service provider number:
SP2021000098

Service no:
CS2021000163

About the service

Hurlford & Crookedholm Early Learning & Childcare Services (SCIO) operates from Hurlford, East Ayrshire to provide a care service to a maximum of 35 children not yet attending primary school at any one time ; no more than 35 are aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school full time, with no more than 15 aged 2 to under 3. Accommodation for children's use consists of main playroom, sensory/quiet room children's toilets and changing room's and two outdoor play areas. The service is close to the local school shops and other local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 June 2023 between 11.00 and 15:30. A further visit took place on 8 June 2023 between 9.30 and 12.30. Two Inspector's carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service
- gathered the views of eighteen families using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and the facilities
- reviewed a sample of relevant documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff
- Children were happy and settled in the service
- Effective staff deployment enabled the staff team to meet children's individual needs
- The management team have successfully led staff to have a strong shared vision values and aims
- Quality assurance systems should continue to be 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?	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

Children experienced nurturing care from a staff team who respected each child as an individual. Staff offered appropriate affection to children in a respectful and playful manner supporting children to feel loved and cared for. Interactions between staff and children were warm, playful and engaging to support children in their learning. This supported children in developing their own sense of identity and self-esteem.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal plans with any targeted plans reviewed and reflective of children's needs. Where children required additional support, this was quickly identified. Staff worked proactively with children, families, and other professionals to identify next steps and strategies based on individual children's needs. When we asked parents view on the quality of care play and learning for their child one parent told us:

" All fantastic support and opportunities for my child".

Lunch time was a pleasant and sociable experience managed in a way that supported children to choose where they would like to eat. Children were relaxed and unhurried, ensuring a positive, sociable experience. Meals were served by a kitchen assistant who knew the children. Staff sat alongside children on hand to offer support. Most children ate well as they made a choice from the menu promoting decision making and independence. This helped children develop a positive attitude to eating. Children helped to clear away after their meal, we suggested they could be offered choice in helping to set the table alongside staff.

Systems and procedures were in place for children's specific health needs. However, we noted gaps in the administration records and storage of medication. We agreed with the manager this would be reviewed and updated as a priority with further monitoring included in the service quality assurance systems.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Through play children were developing relationships. Children had fun as they played sometimes with friends, sometimes on their own, supported by staff to express their thoughts and feelings. This helped children to be confident, feeling safe to communicate their preferences whilst developing relationships with other children.

Children made choices from the play and learning experiences on offer to them either choosing to play indoors or outdoors. Children who required more adult support to engage in play were supported by staff offering appropriate praise and encouragement.

Most children led their own play and learning. Children had access to resources and play experiences that helped develop their language, literacy, and numeracy skills. For example, we saw books being used in all areas of play. However, there was some missed opportunities to extend children's thinking both indoors and outdoors for example to explore, experiment and extend ideas developing more specific language and understanding around pouring, measuring, volume, and capacity. More opportunity for children to mark

make in all areas of play would also support them to understand the purpose of writing in all environments able to share their ideas through the written word recognising print has meaning.

Children freely transported resources around the spaces to support and extend their own play both indoors and outdoors. A few children showed a particular interest in creative play and taking care of the plants exploring the world around them. This contributed to children developing confidence, resilience and positive self-esteem. As a result, some children were busy and engaged in their play for extended periods of time.

Planning approaches were child centred and supported children to progress. Staff carried out observations to help plan for play and learning led by children's individual interests. Staff should consider how they can further develop their skills in extending child led play through the quality of observation, interactions, questioning and commentary. This would help staff to build on children previous learning and plan next steps ensuring children are offered support and challenge.

How good is our setting? 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 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a welcoming and nurturing environment which was organised to provide children with a wide variety of play and learning experiences. A small "cosy nook" had been created to allow children to be on their own respectful of their individual space preferences.

Children could also access a quiet/sensory room off the playroom providing children with a homely space to play together in a small group or have specific one to one time. Children benefited from accessing two outdoor play areas with sheltered areas. This space provided opportunity for children to play and learn outdoors whilst having some space to engage in energetic play.

Resources were accessible for children to choose and included a range of suitable play equipment including natural materials to support children's creative and exploratory play. We observed children collecting their own materials as they engaged in creative and exploratory play having fun.

Secure entry to the service was operated by staff ensuring children could not leave the building unnoticed or anyone entering unauthorised. The manager had reviewed the recording system to show where children were in each of the outdoor areas and indoor playrooms. Staff communicated with each other and maintained records ensuring children's whereabouts were accounted for throughout their session.

Risk assessments were in place, promoting a safe and maintained environment. The main entrance gate adjacent to where children play was secured by a gate with a bolt and supervised by staff. We discussed the potential risk of unauthorised entry to the front children's play area. We agreed with the manager the main entrance gate is included in the outdoor risk assessment regularly reviewed and shared with families the importance of having no unauthorised entry to children's play area.

Effective procedures were in place to regularly review any accidents or incidents. Audits were regularly carried out to identify patterns of possible risks. This ensured the service was keeping children safe. Parents agreed their child was safe whilst in the setting.

Children's safety and wellbeing was promoted through embedded infection prevention and control measures. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times. For example, before meals and after personal care routines.

Secure storage of children's information was maintained protecting and respecting children's right to privacy and dignity.

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 manager had successfully led a review of the service vision, values and aims by consulting with families and staff. Staff were committed to ensuring children and their families have the best possible experience whilst using the service.

The culture of the service valued partnership working with families. Regular communication with families took place through a variety of methods including online platforms, face to face discussions and regular progress meetings. Families told us they received regular communication and staff always made time to share what children had been learning. A parent commented;

"Leadership team is strong with lots of valuable communication."

Staff self-evaluate on a regular basis reflecting on what they are doing well and respond to any suggestions for improvement using informal meetings at the beginning and end of the day. Getting together as a whole team to evaluate was limited to local in-service days or virtual methods. We asked the manager to consider how this could be improved to allow staff to reflect and self-evaluate together to allow for professional dialogue. This will support staff to develop self-evaluation skills and help to plan for improvement.

As part of the service quality assurance system some monitoring had taken place. To ensure children receive high quality play and learning the manager should continue to implement her plan to improve monitoring focusing on children's experiences and outcomes. This will help to influence change developing staff practice to ensure that high-quality learning through play is at the centre of improvement planning.

An improvement plan identified key areas for improvement shared using a family friendly and child friendly version to enable families to comment or contribute their views.

How good is our staff team? 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 4.3 Staff deployment

Children's wellbeing was helped from staff who knew them well. Staff understood their individual care and support needs and adapted their approaches to suit each child. A parent commented;

"I feel like all staff go out of their way to make sure they have a rapport with each and every parent/ caregiver".

Deployment and levels of staff were effective in caring for children with the staffing ratio above the minimum standard. This ensured staff were deployed at all times to meet and deliver care and learning experiences for all children. Lunch breaks were organised to limit any impact on children and supported staff to refresh.

Staff communicated well across the spaces to ensure that they were all working together to best meet the needs of individual children. For example, staff moved between indoors and out in response to the number of children choosing to play outdoors maintaining records for this. Staff informed each other and children as they were about to leave play areas. This provided reassurance for children knowing where the adults caring for them would be helping to develop their confidence.

The staff team is made up of core staff and temporary staff. Together they had developed relationships to support each other by being respectful and flexible in their approaches. They modelled positive social interactions both verbal and nonverbal supporting children to develop understanding of relationships. Tasks were carried out without any impact on the children. The management team was visible during the sessions offering staff support and taking the lead when needed. Staff we spoke to told us they felt valued and supported. This contributed positively to children's overall experiences.

We discussed with the manager further development of staff skills knowledge and any leadership roles identified through monitoring and self-evaluation could contribute to achieving the service improvement plans.

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	5 - Very 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

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