Ladyton Early Education & Childcare Centre
Day Care of Children

Ladyton Early Education & Childcare Centre
Ladyton Shopping Centre
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Unannounced

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Service provided by:
West Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003383

Service no:
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About the service

Ladyton Early Education & Childcare Centre is provided by West Dunbartonshire Council and is registered to provide a care service to 28 children aged two to four years at any one time.

The service is registered separately but is part of the wider St. Ronan's Primary School Campus. The service is based within standalone purpose-built accommodation in Bonhill in West Dunbartonshire and is easily accessible by foot, car and is near to local bus routes.

The accommodation comprises of a large playroom with an adjoining sensory play area, appropriate nappy changing area and children's toilets. Children enjoy additional access to the adjacent school and early learning and childcare facilities. There is a large adjoining outdoor area to offer children opportunities for outdoor play and learning.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 31 May and Thursday 1 June 2023. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. This was the first inspection of the service.

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 15 children using the service and 10 of their families
- spoke with 10 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children experienced high quality care and nurture.
- Children and their families received a warm and personal welcome to the setting.
- Families agreed that staff knew their children well, including what they liked and what was important for their care.
- Children were being well-supported to reach their potential.
- Families were very happy with the progress their children were making.
- Play areas were well-resourced and laid out effectively to promote choice and independence.
- The outdoor environment offered children a wealth of opportunities for meaningful play and learning.
- A highly developed commitment and ethos to teamwork.
- Staff respected and valued the contribution of families.
- Staff valued their role in ensuring a holistic approach to the wellbeing of every child and family.
- A genuine feeling of happiness within the team provided a fun and loving environment in which children could thrive.

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?	6 - Excellent

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 how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Staff were highly motivated to provide a warm and nurturing environment to children and families. As a result of their commitment, children experienced high quality care and nurture. Each morning children and their families received a warm and personal welcome to the setting. We observed lovely conversations between children and their families as they were dropped off in the playroom. Staff valued this time to ensure an effective and mutual exchange of information to support children and their families. Children were quick to settle into the playroom when they arrived which highlighted how safe and secure they felt. Families told us how much it meant to them to have time to talk to their children's keyworkers and other members of staff in the setting, commenting "Going in from the first day was so welcoming, my child ran around as we got details taken and a tour. My child been welcomed with open arms from every single member of staff within Ladyton. They've taken time to figure out what they love, favourite things to do and encouraging things I never thought that my child would ever do" and "My child suffers from separation anxiety and was made safe and reassured and settled straight away and loves being around all their friends."

Staff worked in collaboration with families to prepare and review helpful personal plans for each child containing information about their health, safety and welfare needs as well as likes and dislikes and care routines. This important step furnished staff with the information they required to ensure children received the support they needed with respect and sensitivity. Families agreed that staff knew their children well, including what they liked and what was important for their care. We could see that families were consulted regularly on their children's development and staff involved them in setting next steps. From our discussions, it was clear that staff knew children very well as individuals and could confidently discuss their needs, progress and development.

Comprehensive procedures were in place to help staff meet the needs of those children requiring additional support. The leadership team worked in partnership with families and external agencies to ensure these children received targeted support. Staff were sensitive to the needs of these children and were keen to provide the right support at the right time for each child.

The sensory area provided a calm, relaxing space for children to sleep and rest. One child slept in this area during our visit and we could see that staff followed best practice guidance to support sleeping children. We discussed the benefits of ensuring children did not sleep in buggies. Other areas, indoors and outdoors, had been set up to support children with opportunities to engage in quiet and restful play when it suited their needs.

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure all staff knew about children's dietary and health needs. Procedures for the safe storage and administration of medication were in place. We highlighted the need to (a) amend the medication consent form to ensure staff knew parents had previously administered the first dose of any medication to children at home safely and (b) to maintain clear records when medication arrangements were reviewed.

Children came together to eat snack and lunch within the playroom. Mealtimes were well-organised to support children to gain important independence skills and make healthy choices. Children sat well at these times and enjoyed a pleasant and sociable mealtime experience. Staff supervised children closely and offered support and guidance when it was needed. We noted that there was not enough food delivered at lunchtime to offer children a second helping when they asked for more. Furthermore, this meant that staff missed opportunities for role modelling as there was insufficient food to allow them to eat lunch with the children. We noted that the service provider was keen to rectify this and was negotiating the provision of additional servings with the caterers and reviewing the current menu. We noted that the options for lunch, although healthy, were quite dry. Children would find foods with more moisture content easier to chew and digest. Families told us they were happy with most of the meal choices, commenting "The eating choices are amazing."

There were effective systems in place to control and prevent the spread of infection within the service to protect staff and children. However, the bin in the art area needed to be changed to a pedal bin to comply with current best practice guidance. Nappy changing facilities and procedures complied with best practice guidance. Children and staff washed their hands regularly, with children being well-supported to carry out handwashing in line with best practice guidance. During handwashing, we heard staff talking to children about why it was important to wash their hands. Staff were vigilant about assisting children to wipe their noses and learn good hygiene practices.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were being well-supported to reach their potential. Staff had a strong understanding of child development and how children learn, some discussed the impact of recent Froebel training on the role of the adult in supporting children. Others discussed their role in recognising and supporting children's individual schemas. Schemas are behaviours that children go through when they are exploring the world and trying to find out how things work. Families' comments included: "The staff are absolutely brilliant and give the kids great experiences. For me personally they have used the knowledge they have on my children and used the resources they have to help my children learn and develop. They are helping my children to learn new things and keep them interested in learning."

Children were learning to make choices and be independent. We observed confident, engaged children, who were curious and keen to learn indoors and out. They were learning to be kind to each other, to share and take turns. Staff supported them to make choices and be heard. Children told us they liked to paint and play outdoors with their friends.

Staff used an approach to planning to meet children's learning and development needs that was responsive to children's observed and expressed interests and next steps.

Children's language and communications skills were developed through the many opportunities for singing, storytelling and participation in action rhymes and songs. During our visit, three children demonstrated their singing skills to us while outdoors with an enthusiastic rendition of Wind the Bobbin Up.

Children enjoyed sensory activities with playdough, sand and water. Outdoors we observed two children having lots of fun and concentrating on transferring water into different containers and learning about cause and effect as they watched the water running down the tubes.

Several children enjoyed going on a 'trip' in the large wooden vehicle outdoors, enthusiastically using their imagination to talk about tickets and where they were going, then singing The Wheels on the Bus. Others

developed their gross motor skills riding the bikes around the more physically challenging areas in the garden.

Children's individual learning journals contained high quality observations of the progress they were making in their learning and development. We could see where next steps were identified and how these were taken forward to reach their developmental milestones. During our visit, several children enjoyed showing us their journals and telling us about the photographs and artwork inside. One child compared their baby photo to their current size and asked "What happened to me?" Families told us how much they enjoyed seeing their children's progress in the learning journals.

Floor books and wall displays were being used well to showcase children's progress and demonstrate the high value staff placed on children's contributions to their own learning. Children told us about the 'dummy fairy" display and how this approach was used to celebrate their achievements in moving away from using dummies for comfort.

Staff were keen to promote children's confidence and self-esteem through praise and celebration of their achievements and 'WOW moments'. During our visit staff recognised, supported and took pleasure in children's skills and achievements, consistently offering praise and encouragement.

Families were very happy with the progress their children were making, commenting: "This really is a great nursery they go above and beyond every day for every child to make sure they are happy but also still learning. I wish I could take the teachers onto my child's next adventure we will really miss everyone. Keep up the good work!" and "My child is constantly talking about the ladies, loves doing their numbers and letters. My child is so much more confident and will now speak to new people which is just a delight. My kids are now so happy and excelling and that is down to all the amazing ladies who look after them. They need to be recognised for how amazing they are because of them my family are so much happier and we know for an absolute fact our children are safe with them."

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

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

Ladyton Early Education & Childcare Centre was based within a detached purpose-built centre where children accessed one large playroom, with an adjoining sensory room, cloakroom, appropriate toilets and a changing area. There was free flow access to an enclosed large outdoor play area. The setting was comfortable, furnished to a high standard and welcoming, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. There were effective arrangements in place to ensure the maintenance of the premises. This gave the strong message to children and their families that they mattered. Families agreed that the setting offered a safe and stimulating environment with high quality resources, commenting: "Great condition and the wee settling room is cosy", "Really wide range and selection for the kids which is really helpful for their development" and "Very homely, welcoming setting. From the sensory room to the outside! Every area is well thought out."

Appropriate door entry systems had been installed and maintained to ensure children were safe. We found that children could freely explore indoors and outdoors safely. Staff were familiar with the comprehensive risk assessment documents and procedures in place to identify and control any hazards. We could see that these risk assessments were regularly reviewed to ensure children were safe. Staff were keen to support

children in beginning to assess risk and recognised the benefits children experienced from setting their own safety limits in risky play.

The indoor learning environment was well-resourced and thoughtfully laid out to offer children provocations for learning. Play resources were well-organised and were stored effectively at child-height to encourage children to make choices and self-select. The sensory room was a calm area with soft lighting offering children a tranquil place to play. Indoor play areas were well-defined and offered children opportunities for a range of learning experiences including physical play, sensory play, small world play and role play in the home corner. The art area was scheduled to be upgraded to enhance children's opportunities to be creative.

The outdoor environment provided children with a wealth of opportunities for meaningful play and learning. There were good opportunities for children to experience physical challenge, including hills and slopes to negotiate, large mature trees to swing from and a playhouse on two levels. There were areas for quieter play and covered areas to offer shelter and shade from the weather when needed. Children could experience opportunities for mark-making, music, role play, small world and messy play. Some children particularly enjoyed doing energetic circuits of the garden on trikes and balance bikes during our visit and we could see that they understood that helmets were worn to keep them safe.

Appropriate systems were in place to manage electronic information in line with general data protection requirements managed by the local authority.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

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

Since our last visit, the management arrangements for the service had changed with the setting closely aligned with the school campus. The headteacher and lead practitioner were committed to ensuring staff, children and families were well-supported.

The service improvement plan was underpinned by relevant local and national guidance and legislative frameworks and was a useful tool for improvement, outlining clear points for action, responsibilities and timescales. The priorities were clear, realistic and achievable and progress was documented to highlight where improvements had been made to enhance outcomes for children and their families.

Planning for improvement was well-developed, and the leadership team placed a high value on the contribution of staff, children and their families in highlighting what worked well and what could be better. Staff told us they felt their views and opinions were valued and respected in relation to improvements in the setting. The team used the quality indicator framework How good is our early learning and childcare? to focus on specific areas for improvement at regular meetings. We could see from the records of these discussions that staff were able to recognise and identify strengths and areas of good practice and to highlight where development would improve outcomes for children and their families.

A recent family questionnaire had been issued to inform the service improvement plan and we could see form the analysis of the responses that this had generated very positive feedback about communication between families and the setting. Families told us they were confident about the leadership arrangements within the service and were familiar with the processes for making comments and raising issues within the service.

Delegated leadership arrangements were in place to encourage staff to take on champion roles to lead and promote best practice in designated areas. We spoke with staff about these roles and found that they were enthusiastic and committed to improving outcomes for children and their families in their 'specialist' areas.

The leadership team had developed a calendar for monitoring quality across the setting and carried out regular monitoring to inform the improvement planning processes. We discussed the benefits of focused monitoring of individual children's engagement and interactions and the headteacher was keen to take this forward across the campus.

Appropriate arrangements were in place to record details of any accidents and incidents occurring and to pass this information on to families. Some staff were trained in first aid to ensure they had the skills and confidence to react to any accidents of health issues arising. Accident and incident reports were audited monthly to ensure patterns and hazards could be identified and addressed promptly.

How good is our staff team? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children/people.

The service provider recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed during the day as essential to the wellbeing of children in the service. We found that the approach to adult to child ratios across the setting ensured children were very safe and well-supported. Effective arrangements were in place to ensure staff absences caused as little disruption as possible. Most staff used to cover absences were already known to children and families which ensured further continuity and consistency.

Children were safe and well-supervised at all times. A keyworker system was in place to ensure child received consistency and continuity of care. Each key person had responsibility for ensuring a small group of children felt safe, secure and cared for. Children settled quickly on arrival and we could see that they had formed close attachments with their key person. Families told us how beneficial the keyworker system was to their children, but also how important it was to them to have a designated person to contact to discuss their children. They told us that they valued the relationships they had with their children's keyperson but also appreciated that all staff knew children and their families very well. This gave them confidence that their children were secure and well cared for.

Families told us: "Lovely and best staff I ever met", "The staff are honestly the most welcoming and lovely people I've met. I've said a million times to family and friends that if they can to put their wee ones in there cause what a difference they've made on my child" and "They are so nice, very appropriate and very welcoming."

From our discussions with staff, and our observations of the time they devoted to talking with families, we could see they respected and valued the contribution of parents and carers. Staff valued their role in ensuring a holistic approach to the wellbeing of every child and family.

Staff told us they were very happy in their roles and within the setting. We found that there was a highly developed commitment and ethos to teamwork. Staff recognised the importance of working co-operatively and respectfully together to provide high quality outcomes. However, they also recognised the importance of their roles in supporting the emotional resilience and wellbeing of their colleagues. They respected and

valued the individual skills and experiences of each of their colleagues, which resulted in an enthusiastic, motivated and effective team who provided high quality support to children and families.

During the day, we observed a staff team who worked closely and effectively across the day. They communicated sensitively and effectively to support the children and each other. Necessary housekeeping tasks were carried out with minimum disruption to the children's experiences, especially when a task took staff away from their responsibilities. This allowed staff to work co-operatively together to ensure effective supervision and positive engagement with children across the day.

Staff were very confident in their roles and committed to providing quality outcomes to children, their families and the local community. They were confident and well-trained in their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from harm.

The staff team was educated to a high level with many staff completing further education to enhance and underpin their existing qualifications, skills and experience. They told us they had regular access to high quality development sessions in a range of topics to enhance their practice and improve outcomes for children. Effective mentoring systems in place ensured newer staff felt supported and welcomed into the team. Staff recognised and valued the contribution that new staff brought to the team dynamic.

As mentioned earlier, staff had a well-developed understanding of how children learn and develop and used this knowledge well to support children in their learning. They knew children very well as individuals and were attuned to their needs across the day. Families told us: "The staff are amazing with my child. They know her so well and that makes me feel comfortable leaving her in their care", "I like the friendly staff, very approachable with any concerns all needs and wants are met with compassion", "The nursery staff really care about all the children, I know when I drop my child off they are well looked after and feel safe and happy going" and "The staff go above and beyond to make sure each child is happy and help them learn how they are able to learn."

Throughout our visit, we observed a staff team who treated children with warmth and respect. Children had formed close attachments with their keypersons and other members of staff, which showed us they felt loved and secure in the setting. Children and staff chatted together confidently throughout our visit. Staff positioned themselves well within the setting both indoors and outdoors to ensure they were able to meet children's needs and provide effective care and supervision.

Staff responded considerately and patiently to children's needs, conversations and questions. They were attuned to children's verbal communications and non-verbal cues responding sensitively using a range of methods including Makaton and visual communication cards. Interactions were fun, enabling and empowering and helped children to feel secure within the setting. There was a genuine feeling of happiness within the team which provided a fun and loving environment in which children could thrive.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the service registered. Details of any 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?	6 - Excellent
4.3 Staff deployment	6 - Excellent

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