

# Newmilns Early Childhood Centre Day Care of Children

Newmilns Primary School  
Gilfoot  
Newmilns  
KA16 9LP

Telephone: 01560 320915

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 8 February 2018

**Service provided by:**  
East Ayrshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000142

**Care service number:**  
CS2016348008

## About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

This is a daycare service for children provided by East Ayrshire Council. The service is located within Newmilns Primary School and the Early Childhood Centre has its own entrance, toilet facilities and outdoor play area. The head teacher manages the service. Newmilns Early Childhood Centre was registered on 22 August 2016 to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children aged from 3 years to not yet attending primary school.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We check that services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right For Every Child also known as (GIRFEC). This is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting It Right For Every Child: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible and included, often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators.

A full statement of the aims of the service is available for people using the service.

## What people told us

There were 20 children in attendance during the morning of the inspection visit and 11 children in the afternoon. We observed children engaging in a range of play activities both indoors and out. They played happily in groups, with a friend or on their own and several were happy to tell us about what they were doing. The children went outside in groups and told us about the bird feeders they had made. Children confidently approached staff for help when needed and invited them to join with them in their play.

Children talked about the things they were learning. Children's comments included:

- "A number seven has a line like this and one at the top".
- "It's a cloudy day today".
- "This is for the dinosaurs...it's a cave...that's a T Rex".
- "We made the dinosaur eggs".
- "I'm making the dinner... its soup and that's pasta".
- "I write my name on my picture...look".
- "This is to feed the birds...we are going to hang it outside...we made them".

We sent out ten care standards questionnaires to the service to distribute to parents/carers. Five questionnaires were completed and returned to us. We also spoke with seven parents/carers during the inspection visit. Responses received were positive and included:

- "It's very welcoming. It helps that there are small groups and the head teacher is very visible in the nursery".
- "Staff are all approachable. It's a great nursery they have really helped me and my child".
- "Very supportive, fantastic nursery [child] has come on really well".
- "Very well staffed with enthusiastic, caring teachers who make my child feel very comfortable and valued".
- "From the beginning I have felt welcomed and the staff treat both me and my child with respect and consideration. I am happy with every aspect of the care".

Generally, parents we talked to and those who returned our questionnaires were very happy with the care and support provided by the service. Parents/carers commented that their children were making good progress in various areas of their development with the support of staff; including language and communication, confidence and behaviour. Several parents told us that the service provided appropriate challenge. A few parents/carers commented that they would welcome more opportunities to meet with staff to review their child's progress and one felt the centre was too warm on occasions.

We discussed these matters with the head teacher.

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at the service improvement plan and self-evaluation records. These demonstrated the priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

Staff knew the children well and responded to them with kindness and affection. Particular strengths of the service were positive relationships with families, resulting in children being confident and secure in the setting, and the support provided to children moving on to primary. This included a 'buddy system', shared activities and a 'treasure hunt' to learn where various school activities were located. Parents confirmed that their children had benefitted from good transition arrangements.

Personal plans had been developed and were based on important information shared between the keyworker and the parents/carers. When required, staff worked with other agencies and professionals to help children get the right support. We have asked that staff continue to improve personal plans to reflect how the service will meet each child's individual needs and review when there are significant changes.

Staff valued children as individuals and recognised their prior knowledge as well as their current interests. They effectively supported children's thinking and language skills; for example, at welcome time staff encouraged children to contribute their own ideas and be involved in decision making about their day. Children practiced independence skills through dressing for outdoor play choosing snack/lunch and tidying up. Children's safety, health and wellbeing were effectively supported through good infection control procedures and healthy eating options.

Throughout the morning and afternoon sessions, we saw that the children enjoyed taking part in small group activities that supported language skills. Staff responded to their ideas and interests including counting sticks

outside, filling and emptying water buckets and 'painting' the fence. In the children's records, we could see that staff provided effective support and challenges so that children were learning at an appropriate pace. For children attending full day, we have asked that the service further consider how these children could have a different experience during the afternoon session.

Floorbooks were being developed to record children's ideas, art work, photographs, writing and activities and this was helping to support them in leading their own learning. Staff were using 'Floorbooks' for evaluation and planning to continue to support children's curiosity and progress. To enable children to have better ownership of their floorbooks we have asked that staff continue to increase children's input.

Staff provided a calm and reassuring environment and sensitively supported children and families new to the service. Overall, we found that children were settled, confident and happy.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

Overall, we found that the centre provided a good environment for children to play safely, develop independence and enjoy learning. To keep children safe, there was a secure door entry system and visitors signed in and out of the building. The display area at the entrance was well organised and provided clear information about the work of the centre for parents and visitors.

Throughout the centre, we found that displays and children's activity areas were rich in environmental print and children's work was valued and displayed attractively. We suggested that children's writing and their comments could be better emphasised. The playroom and outdoor area was organised to allow children the freedom to select equipment and materials to play with.

To help keep children safe; staff had completed appropriate training including first aid, food handling and child protection; they demonstrated good infection control practice during food preparation and encouraged children to practice good hand washing skills after using the toilet and before eating. Children were taken to the outdoor play area in groups daily and there were regular visits to a wooded area close to the centre. This offered children opportunities to learn about their local environment, manage risk and investigate the natural world.

Children told us they enjoyed playing outdoors and we saw that they enthusiastically engaged in imaginative play with a range of natural and man-made resources. We have asked that the service continues to improve access to natural 'open ended' materials so that children can use these imaginatively and support their understanding of living things and the local and natural environment.

Children could access the school gym hall for energetic play. They also had access to a multipurpose room where they took part in small group activities designed to support language and communication. We have suggested that staff consider creating a small cosy space within the playroom, where children can relax or rest.

The small group of children attending full days had lunch in the dinner hall. We observed that, although staff managed this well, we felt that children's experiences could be improved in a quieter environment where children and staff could be involved in preparing and serving lunch and portion sizes could be monitored for the individual children. The head teacher told us she had lunch time under review.

Although we have identified some areas for improvement, overall, the service was operating to a good standard for this quality theme, leading to positive experiences and outcomes for children.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

Although a relatively new team, staff had created a welcoming, pleasant environment. They were good role models for the children. Staff listened to children in a calm, unhurried manner and asked appropriate questions to further extend the child's use of language. Parents we talked to spoke highly of the staff members and in the centre's questionnaires parents had commented; "The staff all do a great job" and "All the staff welcome you each day". This indicated there were positive home link relationships.

There had been good support for children moving on to primary through shared activities with the primary children and effective working between the primary and the Early Childhood Centre. All staff interacted well with each other and with the children, students and parents/carers.

Staff had been safely recruited and vetted and we found them to be skilled and professional. They demonstrated that they were motivated to improve the service and happy at their work. They engaged fully with the inspection process. Staff held appropriate childcare qualifications and all staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC - responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training). Staff were taking on leadership roles including communication champion, developing numeracy and outdoor learning.

Staff participated in yearly appraisals, training opportunities and regular monitoring of practice. They regularly discussed formally and informally how they could best meet the needs of the children. Students and staff new to the team were supported through an effective induction and mentor system. In the staff questionnaires returned to us, staff commented that they were enjoying their work, they felt that they had built a good team and the head teacher had made positive changes.

Overall, we found that the staff team were working well together and were supported effectively by management. This meant that outcomes for children were continuing to improve and a friendly, happy and inclusive environment was in place. Staff will have a key role in taking forward the areas for improvement we have identified within this report.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

The head teacher provided consistent and effective leadership. She clearly valued the skills and commitment of staff. As previously outlined in this report, with her support, staff were taking on leadership roles in developing play and learning experiences for children and sharing good practice. The head teacher and staff worked closely with the local authority quality improvement team to develop the service. They also worked closely with other agencies to support children and families. We could see this was leading to positive outcomes for the children.

We found that good monitoring and evaluation systems were in place and the head teacher was continuing to develop the quality assurance process to include parents, staff and children. Examples included parents comments gathered during reviews of children's progress, a 'secret inspector' questionnaire, children's comments in the floorbooks, team meetings and meetings between individual staff members and the head teacher. Staff also participated in developing the improvement plan for the service.

The priorities from the improvement plan were reviewed to ensure they were on target to meet any timescales set, further develop children's play and learning experiences and involve staff, parents/carers. In the current improvement plan, examples of targets included developing opportunities for writing experiences, helping children to manage risk, and promoting language and literacy through developing home link resources. We saw good evidence that these priorities were being addressed. The head teacher told us that she also planned to improve tracking of children's progress and support staff in identifying ways to do this.

To support positive experiences for children, the head teacher had a clear vision for developing the Early Childhood Centre and was committed to making improvements. Staff were enthusiastic and contributed to the self-assessment and improvement agenda. They were familiar with the national improvement framework and best practice guidance, including 'How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare', 'Building the Ambition' and 'Setting the Table'. Overall, we are confident the service will continue to improve and areas for further development will be taken forward.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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