

Alloway Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 May 2023

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Alloway Early Years Centre is based within Alloway Primary School in Alloway, Ayr. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children aged 3 years and over. The service is close to the local library, shops, parks and amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 May 2023 between 9:45 and 17:15.

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 29 people using the service
- Spoke with 12 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with visiting professionals

Key messages

- Staff supported families and had built up good, positive relationships.
- The service worked well with other agencies to support children in their learning and development.
- The service had good links with the local and wider community.
- The service were confident in evaluating how well they were doing and areas for improvement through self-evaluation.
- Staff worked well as a team to support children.
- The service should review their administration of medication procedures to ensure medication is administered safely.
- The service should review their procedures for logging the attendance of children within the setting.

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?	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.

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Staff used warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support children. Planned approaches to support children to identify, express and regulate their emotions were in place and we observed effective use of the nurture room to support individual children. Children were provided with opportunities to engage in one to one support with a familiar adult and participate in small group experiences to support their learning and development. One parent commented: "Since starting Alloway my child has flourished, the staff are kind, caring and extremely nurturing".

Planned approaches to support children with additional support needs were effective. Where support was required and strategies identified, these were implemented by staff to meet children's needs. A successful multi agency approach was applied where children were in need of support or protection. Staff attended necessary meetings, liaised with professionals and implemented the effective use of chronologies to enable staff to intervene appropriately and ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

Staff supported families and had built up positive relationships which enabled them to meet children's individual needs. Effective communication through informal daily chats and stay and play sessions, which were planned in response to family needs, enabled parents and carers to be involved in their child's care and receive family support. This gave staff the opportunity to talk to parents about their child and parents the opportunity to take part in some of their child's experiences.

Well planned transitions ensured staff took time to get to know the children before they started at the service. Staff engaged in home visits and met with children at familiar playgroups prior to them starting at the service. In addition, strong links with the adjoining primary school meant familiar experiences were in place for children moving from the setting to the school. This ensured consistent care during periods of change for children.

Children received regular praise and encouragement from staff. This increased their self-esteem and supported them to learn social skills. For example, staff reminded children to use "walking feet", "kind hands" and praised children's achievements. The leadership team discussed how they intend to build on this by working towards the Rights Respecting Schools Award.

We observed that mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried experiences for children where they engaged in conversations with their friends and were supported to develop independence. Children helped set the tables for lunches and staff supported them to take ownership in this. We highlighted aspects of the lunchtime routine which could be improved. This included reviewing infection prevention control procedures and reviewing the routine prior to lunch to reduce unnecessary disruptions in children's play.

Staff knew children well and could discuss in depth children's individual daily care needs. Personal plans identified individual targets for children, however, not all plans identified clearly how targets would be met. In addition, we asked that increased consideration be given to children's ideas, interest and wishes when developing their personal plans.

We found that administration of medication processes were not robust. There were gaps in staff recordings on administration paperwork, such as expiry dates and medication forms to be completed by staff were not in line with guidance. Staff should review the procedures for administration of medication to ensure these are in line with best practice guidance **(see are for improvement 1)**.

We found that children were not safely recorded on arrival or departure from the service. The systems in place did not fully support staff to know where children were. On the day of inspection, the total numbers of children present were different from the register and the display wall. Staff should record accurate times of arrival and departure of children and cross check these at regular times throughout the day. This would ensure all children were accounted for **(see area for improvement 2)**. To inform improvements, we encouraged staff to review the Care Inspectorate Keeping children Safe Practice Notes. The practice notes can be found on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were actively and meaningfully involved in leading their play. A balance of planned and spontaneous experiences promoted choice and independence. Experiences were regularly shared with parents through the use of a digital app. Children were having fun participating in a range of experiences suited to their individual needs. One parent commented:

"Communication is a huge strong point with the service. We are always updated on our child's day and how their early years education is progressing".

The indoor and outdoor environments were well considered and resourced to provide literacy and numeracy opportunities through play. We observed opportunities for children to engage with books and mark making both indoors and outdoors. Links with the local library supported wider family literacy through planned 'Bookbug' sessions. As a result, children's skills were progressing well.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were supported by connecting to their own and wider communities. Children benefitted from access to local parks and planned 'forest school' experiences. These enabled children to develop respect for their communities and natural environments, whilst engaging in risk enabling play. One parent commented: "Staff are kind and caring. I like that children are taken to the library and to the play park and on little trips, for example, most recently to Dumfries House".

Staff had a good understanding of child development and relevant theory and used this to support emotional resilience and wellbeing of children. Staff's use of nurturing approaches ensured timely, responsive interventions that supported self and co regulation where appropriate.

Senior staff demonstrated confidence and competence to track children's progress and development in key areas, such as literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing. This was further supported by the implementation of a tracking processes. The service would benefit from reviewing current planning processes to better ensure play and learning experiences provide depth and meaningfully include children's interests, ideas and life experiences.

Areas for improvement

1.

To ensure children's health care needs are safely met, administration of medication procedures should be reviewed and further developed. This should include, but not limited to, ensuring that all staff are aware of their role and responsibility regarding the safe administration of medication and that procedures and recording of medication are in line with current best practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

2.

To support children's wellbeing the provider should ensure children are cared for in a safe and secure environment.

This should include, but is not limited to, reviewing and further developing the procedure for recording children's attendance and ensuring the environment is secure.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The setting was well ventilated and furnished appropriately. The setting's indoor and outdoor environments were structured appropriately to take account of children's individual needs and spaces were appropriately resourced to support play and learning.

Arrangements were in place for maintenance and repairs. Staff actively reported any repairs and maintenance in a timely manner. This ensured a safe environment for children.

Whilst the outdoor environment was stimulating and inviting, we identified this as an area the service could improve to ensure the environment is secure. We observed potential boundaries within the nursery outdoor garden area which posed a risk to children being able to leave the nursery outdoor area unsupervised. **(refer to area for improvement 2 within Key Question 1 'How good is our nurture, care and support')**.

The service had policies and procedures in place to support a safe environment for children, however, we found that infection prevention and control practices were not consistently followed. We identified concerns regarding the close proximity of food preparation/serving areas to open toilets, inconsistent staff handwashing at mealtimes and unnecessary items stored in toilet/changing areas. Staff would benefit from reviewing infection prevention control guidance and making any necessary improvements.

We signposted the service to Space to Grow guidance to support them in best practice. This can be found on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Staff and management recognise the importance of children having free flow access to outdoors and have been proactive in attempts to source a solution. They have discussed ways to open the doors to enable children to have free flow access outdoors, however due to structural challenges with building management this has been unable to be implemented. Children are not yet benefitting from free flow access to outdoors. Providing children with free flow access outdoors would enable children to take ownership in their play and independently choose where they wanted to play.

Children's personal information was stored securely in compliance with general data protection regulations and secure systems were in place to manage electronic information.

The service had a process in place for recording any accidents and incidents which occur within the service. We discussed with the service reviewing these to ensure all relevant information is included. This would provide the service with all the necessary information to effectively audit these, making appropriate changes to reduce risks.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

3.1 Quality Assurance and Improvements are well led

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

The service had a clear improvement plan which incorporated targets suited to the needs of the school and nursery. The improvement plan was linked to a national improvement framework and identifies some key priorities for further development. This supported the senior management team to track progress in specific areas to meet national priorities.

Positive communication, good relationships and regular meetings between staff and management meant staff were kept informed about what was happening in the service. This helped to ensure staff remained knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities.

Staff engaged in professional dialogue with other early years services, sharing knowledge, experience and practice. Staff completed a peer observation sheets following visits to other services, these related to supporting documentation, such as, How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare. The service would benefit from reflecting on this information and evaluating what impact this would have on practice.

Staff reflected well together and used time appropriately to engage in meaningful, solution orientated discussions daily. This enhanced outcomes for children and families within the service.

The service consulted with parents and we saw some evidence of consultations with parents through questionnaires. Staff provided feedback to parents in relation to these consultations. This ensured parents were listened to and their views and opinions taken on board to influence changes and better ensure positive outcomes for children.

Staff welcomed families into the setting and built up positive relationships through stay and play sessions, formal and informal meetings.

This enabled parents to be involved in their child's learning and development.

Some monitoring processes were in place, such as, staff practice and children's engagement. These should continue to be developed and incorporate the monitoring of documentation and recordings such as medication (**see area for improvement 1 within key question 1 'How good is our care, play and learning'**).

Staff personal development reviews were in place which identified strengths and areas staff wanted to develop. The leadership team discussed the further implementation of leadership roles within the staff team enabling staff to take ownership in aspects of the service providing the best possible outcomes for children.

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 therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

There were sufficient numbers of staff deployed appropriately throughout the learning environment who supported each other and worked well together.

Staff deployment was planned relating to children's individual needs. Children had one to one support which supported them in their learning and development. Staff supported each other well in implementing and maintaining consistency in strategies for children across the service. Staff ensured effective supervision and quality engagement with children throughout the day. One parent commented: "They are a great team who always give us and our child time and help when we need it".

The ethos between team members was positive and interactions between staff were kind and respectful. Staff lunches were also planned appropriately and minimised disruption to children's play and routines. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children to feel comfortable and secure in.

Staff were enthusiastic in developing their skills and knowledge to support the children in their care and worked well with other agencies to support children in their learning and development. Staff took part in ongoing annual training, such as, child protection and had opportunities to select courses of interest relating to areas of practice.

Policies and wellbeing support from management maximised attendance which supported consistency in children's care routines.

Staff had a good knowledge of child development and used appropriate language and questioning during play experiences to extend children's play and learning. This enabled children to develop their imaginations and enrich their play and learning.

There was a mix of differing experience, knowledge and skills within the staff team. We discussed with the service the importance of staff continuing to take ownership of processes and procedures and understanding their individual roles and responsibilities within these. This would support in providing positive outcomes for children.

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	4 - 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?	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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