

# Space Place Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

St. Ninian's Park Place  
Prestwick  
KA9 1SP

Telephone: 01292 473 468

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
25 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
South Ayrshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003269

**Service no:**  
CS2014325238

## About the service

Space Place Early Years Centre is registered to provide a daycare service to a maximum of 52 children from two years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided by South Ayrshire Council and at the time of inspection, the service was managed by the temporary head of centre.

Space Place Early Years Centre is located within St Ninian's Park Place in the town of Prestwick, South Ayrshire. The service is provided from a detached building which has two main playrooms, a family room/dining room, indoor sensory area, reception/office, staff room, staff toilets, nappy changing and children's toilets. There is direct access from each playroom to a large enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery makes very good use of other areas within the local community.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 October and 5 November 2025. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 children using the service
- received electronic feedback from 3 parents/carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services

## Key messages

- Children experienced high-quality, engaging play and learning opportunities that supported their creativity, curiosity, and progression across curricular areas.
- Children were very well supported and cared for by friendly, kind, caring and attentive staff who were attuned to their needs.
- Children experienced a very welcoming, homely and well-resourced setting and we agreed with the management team to further extend opportunities for families to come into playrooms and engage in nursery life.
- Planning and assessment processes were developing well, with clear links to progression pathways and home links. Continued focus on building upon the existing play and stay opportunities for families will further enhance outcomes for all children.
- The staff team were deployed effectively enhancing their mix of skills and experience enabling them to respond to children's needs.
- Leaders had developed a strong ethos of continuous improvement and staff were empowered to share ideas and were beginning to take on individual leadership roles.

## 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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## Leadership 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The vision for creating a nurturing, loving and respectful environment was reflected in practice. Clear vision and values meant that staff had a strong understanding of the aspirations of the service. The core values of children's rights, care and supporting children to achieve their full potential created a nurturing and respectful learning environment which valued children as individuals. Whilst this was frequently reviewed by staff, we discussed where parents and children could be further involved to help ensure an inclusive approach in reviewing the settings vision and values, in line with the service changing their operational hours recently.

Staff were passionate, motivated and wanted the best outcomes for children. There was a strong ethos of continuous improvements within the setting that enhanced the delivery of high-quality practice. Leaders had embedded a shared approach to self-evaluation, where staff were beginning to share their view, ideas and suggestions. This helped support reflection and continuous improvement to promote positive outcomes for children. Staff spoke positively about contributing towards change and felt their suggestions mattered and they were heard. Staff told us "We have regular personal development meetings, when we can reflect on our progression as practitioners."

Leaders and staff had a shared understanding of plans in place for improvement. This was enhanced through distributive leadership approaches. This included well informed initiatives, to support children such as "nurturing mathematical thinkers," and "phonological awareness strategies," which was supporting the continuous development of the service and the emotional wellbeing of children. We agreed that staff should continue to record the impact of these initiatives and sharing these outcomes with families.

Quality assurance processes supported the continuous improvement of the service, this included a detailed improvement plan. Timeously check-ins supported staff in recording their progression within improvements, as well as highlighting where adjustments needed to be made. The acting manager had already carried out some monitoring visits, such as playroom observations and audits of learning journals. She prioritized this as a key action to deepen her understanding of staff and children's needs, demonstrating a proactive approach to familiarizing herself with the service. We discussed where some approaches could be further developed, for example involving staff in deciding the content of staff meeting agendas.

Children and families experienced a welcoming, warm and inclusive environment. Effective methods of communication, such as newsletters, surveys and parent feedback supported parents to be included in evaluating aspects of the service and driving improvement. Parents told us "we are always asked for suggestions or ideas to help improve." The service could further develop their approaches to reflect the outcome of parents and children's voice within the self-evaluation processes. One parent told us that they would like to return to receiving more photographs of what their child does daily. Another parent told us "The staff are incredibly nurturing and helpful. They genuinely care about the children and all experiences the children take part in are clearly thought out and always very creative."

Induction programmes helped to develop staff awareness of the setting and the needs of children. The induction processes included discussion with management and being mentored by a designated staff member within playrooms. One parent told us "Staff take that time to talk to you! Staff treat you like family."

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children's right to play was at the heart of the service's approach. Children were having fun and were engaged in a range of play opportunities. Staff recognised and valued play as an opportunity for developing skills for life, promoting children's learning. This included supporting children's independence when getting ready to go out on a walk in the surrounding area. Children told us "we can play outside whenever we want", "look at me, I can get ready all by myself" and "I love looking at the aeroplanes in the sky, when we go our walk before our lunch."

Consideration had been given to the layout of the rooms to offer a range of spaces for children to make choices, support their interest and develop their ideas. The enabling and creative environment supported all children to lead and direct their own learning both indoors and outdoors. They had time, space and support to make decisions and develop their learning, creativity, resilience and independence. Overall children's play was balanced to meet children's interests. The free-flow approach to play meant children's play was not unnecessarily interrupted and they could make meaningful play choices, promoting child led play. One parent told us "[my child] loves outdoors and [they] love that [they are] free to explore this area when they want, when weather allows." We discussed how extending Play and Stay sessions would allow parents to fully engage in the nursery, to see how children learn, based on current best practice. One parent told us "It is very child led and my daughter can choose what she enjoys the most at any time."

Staff were knowledgeable and demonstrated a strong understanding of what children need to learn and develop. They were responsive to children and interacted in a way that supported their thinking and learning. Staff used effective questioning, commenting and pausing to allow children time to think and make decisions through their discoveries. Children were engaged in play experiences for prolonged periods of time showing high levels of engagement, excitement, wonder and awe. Younger children were exploring how to use pumpkins to create art whilst exploring schemas (repeating patterns of behaviour) they were, filling and emptying containers that stored pumpkins and staff supported them to spoon out the flesh. Older children had chosen vinyl records to decorate to represent witches for Halloween. Staff made very good use of books and other media to extend this experience for the children. These experiences embedded a sense of purpose and achievement for children throughout the day.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interest, using a mixture of intentional and responsive planning. Staff used observations of individual children's patterns of play to plan, support, challenge and extend their learning. This enabled children to progress at their own pace. Parents told us "I would highly recommend this nursery to any other parent, the way the Reggio Emilia approach is used is lovely for children." and "their confidence is just growing and growing thanks to the caring and nurture side of the staff." We observed children displaying a wide range of skills including; language, literacy, and numeracy. These were enhanced through a balance of child-led and adult-supported interactions. These playful experiences were responsive to children's interests and developmental needs. This contributed to their motivation and sustained engagement.

The service enriched children's experiences by actively making good use of the local community with regular walks, visits to the shops, park outings that nurtured a sense of belonging. Additionally walks to the beachfront locally offered a wealth of benefits such as, connecting with nature, developing understanding of environmental responsibility, and instilling a sense of wonder and respect for nature. Children benefited from a rich and varied environment leading outdoors from the playrooms that offered challenge, choice, and opportunities for physical, social, and cognitive development. Well-resourced areas included a mud kitchen, bug hotel, a wooden adventure climbing frame, planting and growing, opportunities to explore risky play and areas to play alone or in a larger group.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions that helped them feel safe and secure. Staff knew the needs of children well and were responsive to their cues and requests. Staff were down at children's level engaging in play and conversations. They listened and followed children play ideas. This helped children feel valued and respected. One parent told us "all the staff are genuinely interested in my child and us all as a family. They are available to help if needed and offer their support."

Staff understood the importance and individual approach to transitions, which were tailored to the needs of children and families. This included home to nursery and between playrooms. Staff worked closely with families to observe and reflect on how children managed this transition to ensure it was a pace that was right for and helped them feel safe. Staff took time to get to know children which supported them to respond sensitively to their needs and interests. This supported them to build strong connection with families. One parent told us "My children settled in Space Place very quickly and I couldn't be happier with the service. All staff are amazing".

Children's privacy and dignity was respected. Personal care needs were delivered in a warm, kind and respectful manner. We witnessed children being sang to smoothly at changing times, which helped children to feel safe at this personal time. Children benefitted from relaxed, sociable and unhurried mealtimes. Opportunities for preparing snack and self-serving meals were available which supported children's independence and skills for life. Staff were knowledgeable about children's routines and dietary needs. They interacted with children throughout mealtime experiences, supporting children's language and communication skills. One parent told us "My child loves the food provided. The staff always encourage my child to eat a wide variety of foods." Fresh water was available throughout the day, which helped to ensure children stayed hydrated.

Suitable procedures were in place to ensure safe administration of medication. Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs and had undertaken training to support their knowledge of complex medical conditions.

Personal plans were created in partnership with parents which helped to promote consistent care for children. This included children's interests, preferences and needs. One parent told us "personal plan meetings are planned effectively throughout the year." External family support staff told us "the staff in the nursery are always professional, approachable and know the children in their care so well" and "I have a very good working relationship with the nursery staff and find that they demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting children's health, development and wellbeing."



Staff valued the importance of meaningful engagement with families. They worked hard to create a warm, welcoming environment, where everyone felt welcomed, nurtured and supported. Creative approaches were seen from staff, to support home and nursery links. These included children exploring the book called Stick Man. Staff had given parents resources to create him at home and bring into nursery. Children were excited to show us what they had made at home and then brought into nursery. Take home teddy encouraged children to take the teddy around the local community and wider. This opportunity allowed children to talk about where they had visited and also increased children's confidence and language. A wide range of programmes were available to the local community that were delivered by the Family Support Team, this increased family engagement throughout Prestwick, providing opportunities to support families as they required. These included book bug sessions, which links very well with the language and communication accreditation that the nursery is currently achieving.

## Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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