

## Merkland Playscheme Day Care of Children

Merkland School  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
10 August 2022

**Service provided by:**  
East Dunbartonshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003380

**Service no:**  
CS2004063770

## About the service

Merkland Playscheme is an East Dunbartonshire Council service for children with additional support for learning needs. The service is located in Merkland School in Kirkintilloch and operates during school holiday periods only.

The service is registered to accommodate a maximum of 20 primary school aged children at any one time. The service aims to provide a range of fun activities within a safe environment.

## About the inspection

This was a full inspection which took place on 27 July 2022. 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.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure that they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC), 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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 10 people using the service and 3 of their family
- spoke with 10 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- The management and staff team had created a welcoming, inclusive, nurturing, safe and caring environment for children.
- All children received the support they needed to reach their full potential: staff knew children well and knew the activities that they enjoyed.
- Planning approaches were child centred and reflected children's interests. Children were leading their play with support from staff who knew children well.
- Staff benefited from appropriate training that helped them to understand the complexity of the needs of the children they were caring for and to provide individualised, responsive care.
- The service was well led by a strong, approachable management team who delegated responsibility appropriately to senior staff and involved them in development of the service.

## 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?	5 - Very Good

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

The management and staff team had created a welcoming, inclusive, nurturing, safe and caring environment for children. We saw that positive interactions and meaningful relationships had supported staff to maximise children's potential.

Children could express their wishes through displays like 'children's voices' and clearly see who was supporting them via 'who's with who today'. This demonstrated a caring and sensitive approach by staff.

Most staff who worked in the service knew children well from either working in the school or from previous playschemes. Newer staff were able to support children by liaising with these staff, reading children's personal plans and sharing evaluations/information with parents on a daily basis.

Overall very good information was shared with parents. At the start of the playscheme parents received the parent handbook, a parent welcome letter and a bus escort letter. This helped to inform parents and provided reassurance about their child's placement.

Parent playscheme evaluations were very positive with a high percentage of parents commenting very positively on children's experience at the playscheme, communication and support provided to children.

Both, parents and staff were complimentary about the high level of consultation, feedback and involvement they had within the service. Very good information sharing ensured consistency and continuity of care for children. An open day for parents in advance of the playscheme enabled them to visit the service and meet staff.

Parents commented:

"All information was sent by email in advance. It was comprehensive and easy to understand."

"The staff are familiar with my child and took the time to listen to what he needed to feel safe and secure. Information was gathered in advance of the playscheme by email. By focusing on activities that my child enjoyed there was more opportunity for engagement and learning."

We saw children enjoying a very positive lunchtime experience with lots of support and encouragement from staff. There was a relaxed, sociable atmosphere with staff spending time with children.

We saw staff supporting children who displayed challenging behaviour. Staff successfully and sensitively de-escalated situations and settled children, ensuring that other children were kept safe and secure. Staff were aware of their responsibilities to safe guard children from harm. Staff were vigilant to protect children from injury/harm.

Children's individual wellbeing benefited from the effective use of personal planning. Child centred, responsive care on a 1:1 adult/child ratio, individual support plans and flexible, responsive planning meant that children and young people enjoyed activities and experiences that were individualised and meaningful.

Wellbeing indicators from GIRFEC (Getting it right for every child, national guidance) were taken account of when planning experiences for children.

All children received the support they needed to reach their full potential: staff knew children well and knew the activities that they enjoyed. Children were comfortable and at ease with staff and engaged very well. Staff were very respectful towards children.

Staff told us about the playscheme training. This year additional training on behaviour management and Makaton level 1 was provided as part of the annual playscheme training. This helped staff to successfully communicate with and support children.

Staff told us they had time each day to plan and reflect on the child they were supporting. They also had time to read children's care plans in advance of attending the service. This forward planning ensured that the quality of service children and families received was of very high quality.

### How good is our setting?

### 5 - Very Good

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

Children had fun as they experienced high quality play, learning and development opportunities. Children were empowered to be fully involved in their play and learning through the skilled interactions and actions of staff.

Planning approaches were child centred and reflected children's interests. Children were leading their play with support from staff who knew children well, for example, we observed staff positively responding to children, employing skilled interactions that helped children to develop and extend their play, be creative and curious and make their own decisions. This was evident where children were building an outdoor den. There were lots of freeflow play experiences and stimulating and challenging resources across all areas to develop children's skills.

We saw children having lots of fun during our visit. Most children enjoyed playing outdoors on bikes, playing football, creating a den, playing on the swings. Children were playing electronic games indoors and enjoying the soft play/sensory areas and arts and crafts. Children were having 1:1 support in their play with staff.

Areas and resources were thoughtfully and attractively presented. Staff had sectioned the large gym hall to provide a physical area and a smaller cosier, quieter area for children. Positive interventions and creative approaches helped children to engage in play and learning and enriched experiences available to them. Staff knew what children liked to play with and provided resources and encouragement to children when they were ready to change activity. Outside agencies provided activities such as indepen - dance, little lotus yoga, music and drama. Children enjoyed themed days such as disney and superhero.

New staff had completed training that helped them to understand basic child development. All staff were carrying out observations for all children and sharing information with each other, for example, when staff had breaks and other staff took over. This was carefully managed with very smooth transitions for children.

Children's personal information was safely stored to maintain confidentiality and protection for children.

Playroom quality assurance checklists and risk assessments were in place to monitor play areas and ensure safety and security for children.

The premises were maintained but were tired and in need of redecoration and refurbishment. A new build school which would accommodate the playscheme in future was in the process of being provided by the local authority.

There were infection prevention and control practices in place which ensured that children were kept safe. We observed good hygiene practices for example, staff and children regularly handwashing and cleaning of toys and equipment.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

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

Staff we spoke with during the inspection told us that they felt valued and were well supported by management and senior staff who were accessible and helpful. Management was approachable and staff were consulted on a daily basis. Staff also told us they enjoyed the playscheme training they received and working in the service.

One staff member commented:

"I am a senior playscheme worker but always feel I can approach higher management with any issues that may arise or just to double check things".

The service was well led by a strong, approachable management team who delegated responsibility appropriately to senior staff and involved them in development of the service. Good direction was provided to the staff team. Staff were supported to have confidence in their capacity to support children to reach their full potential. The whole team was committed to providing children and families with positive experiences. Staff morale was high and there was a strong sense of teamwork. Staff worked well together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. This impacted very strongly on children's experiences on a daily basis.

There was a shared vision, values, aims and objectives which positively informed practice. Parents and staff were regularly consulted and involved in decision making. Children and families' views were sought regarding the development of the service.

The manager had a comprehensive understanding of the importance of using the views of children and families, as well as partners, to inform planning and development of the service. This meant that parents understood what was going on in the service and empowered them to support their children and work in partnership with staff.

One parent commented:

"Very well managed and organised. All information and notice of dates are sent well in advance to help parents and carers plan for holidays".

The manager was forward thinking and had a clear focus on improvement and next steps for development. Quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, encouraged the management team and staff to reflect on and evaluate their practice. This ensured that children enjoyed high quality experiences of care, play and learning and created a culture of continuous improvement.

A comprehensive self evaluation and improvement plan which reflected the new quality framework for daycare of children, childminders and school-aged childcare was in place. This supported staff to improve the quality of provision and measure achievements and outcomes for children.

### How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

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

Staff benefited from appropriate training that helped them to understand the complexity of the needs of the children they were caring for and to provide individualised, responsive care.

Staff deployment was effective in ensuring high-quality outcomes for children. Staff were well deployed to ensure that their differing experience, knowledge and skills were well used to support experiences for children. This also helped to promote continuity of care for children with staff sharing information and observations of children with other staff.

Children were well supervised, receiving one-to-one care from staff who were observant and vigilant. Staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit children. Staff were highly motivated and there was a very positive ethos.

Staff were mindful of respecting and promoting children's rights. This supported children's wellbeing and helped children to develop to their full potential. We saw children being offered choices and making decisions about their play and learning.

Newer staff told us how they were well supported and mentored by senior staff. They told us they enjoyed working in the service and felt involved and part of a good team.

We found that the senior management team role modelled positive childcare practices that supported staff to provide sustained high quality outcomes for children. The management team demonstrated clear communication, fostered positive behaviour and regularly praised the efforts of staff.

### 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).

## 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good



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