

St. Columba's School Day Care of Children

Knockbuckle Road
Kilmacolm
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 August 2022

Service provided by:
St. Columba's School Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003003586

Service no:
CS2003016197

About the service

St. Columba's School is an Independent School situated in the rural village of Kilmacolm in Inverclyde. The early years centre is registered to provide early learning and childcare to a maximum of 46 children aged 3 to those not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. Of those 46 no more than 30 may be accommodated in the indoor nursery building and no more than 16 may be accommodated in the outdoor service.

Children are cared for in the early years department within the school. This comprises of an indoor playroom, an outdoor play space and a secure wooded area. Children also access the school lunchroom, and other classrooms within the junior school for learning opportunities such as French and physical activity.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday, 29 August and Tuesday, 30 August 2022. 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 10 people using the service and two of their family representatives
- spoke with seven staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and settled at nursery. They had developed positive relationships with staff and their peers.
- Children had opportunities to develop their imagination, creativity and problem-solving through outdoor play.
- Children's emotional wellbeing was supported through effective partnership with parents.
- Staff were committed to their roles and keen to secure positive outcomes for children.
- Facilities for nappy changing procedures need to be improved.

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?	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.

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 people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and nurturing care which supported their emotional wellbeing. Staff were kind and caring towards children, taking time to listen and respond. They offered appropriate cuddles when needed to reassure children. This meant that children felt settled and secure.

Transitions to the nursery were carefully planned to support children and families. As a result, staff knew the care and support needs of individual children. One parent told us, "Considering the staff have only known my son for a short time, they have such a clear intuition of his needs. They have kept very clear communication about his development and his future needs but also speak very fondly of him (which is lovely as a parent!) and know his wee personality already".

Personal plans were in place to support the needs of children. Targets were agreed with parents, and clear strategies were put in place to ensure children were supported to make progress. Children's learning was recorded and shared with parents in e-learning journals, and parents could share achievements from home. As a result, children were making progress.

Mealtimes were calm, relaxed, and unhurried. Children could choose from a variety of nutritious lunch options, and they were encouraged to try new foods through "taster options". Staff took time to sit with children and chat with them, ensuring a sociable lunch experience. Staff were mindful of children's individual needs and made adjustments to ensure that all children were included in the lunch experience. We asked staff to carry out a risk assessment for children who moved from their seat while eating. To support this, we signposted them to good practice guidance, "Managing choking episodes in babies and children".

Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs. They were trained in first aid should children require medical assistance. Procedures were in place for the safe administration of medication. We noted that permission was not in place for one child who may require medication. This was quickly rectified by the leadership team when highlighted by inspectors. Leaders should monitor medication records to ensure any gaps in children's records are quickly identified and addressed.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were leading their play and learning. They could make choices about where they wanted to play and what they wanted to do. This was supported by staff who recognised the value of play and skilfully interacted with children to support their learning and development. As a result, children were having fun and developing their confidence.

Planning approaches were child centred and there was a good balance of spontaneous and planned learning experiences. In particular, the outdoor environment supported quality play experiences for children. A large selection of natural and open-ended materials challenged children's thinking and encouraged them to problem solve.

For example, children were climbing, balancing, and jumping as they worked together to redesign an assault course. Indoors, children enjoyed building with Lego, and making playdough. These experiences could be enriched by providing further resources that would encourage further challenge.

Children's language skills were very well supported. Children were encouraged to "use their words" to regulate their emotions, and staff were skilled at building a language rich environment that supported children to learn new vocabulary. Children developed literacy and numeracy skills through play, and baseline assessments allowed staff to identify any gaps in learning and plan appropriate activities.

Strong connections in the community supported children's opportunities for play and learning. Children enjoyed joint activities with residents from a local care home, such as exercise and dance, and they had visited the National Museum of Rural Life together. This enhanced children's learning experiences and allowed them to build meaningful relationships with the older generation.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements are needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Children were cared for in an environment that was clean, bright, and welcoming. They had sufficient space to move around and make choices about where they wanted to play. One parent told us, "We love the early years environment and feel very lucky that our child has the opportunity to have a great start to her education".

Outdoor play spaces were a particular strength. Children were engaged in a wide range of activities that interested and challenged them. For example, they grew fruit and vegetables, balanced on bikes, and assessed their own risk as they climbed and jumped from wooden platforms. Regular trips to the "wild woodies" supported children to develop their curiosity and problem-solving skills. Children were having fun as they looked for bugs and played imaginatively in the mud kitchen. Staff should review indoor spaces to ensure it consistently provides the same level of interest and challenge.

There were some quiet spaces for children to relax. Soft, cosy materials were being reintroduced after restrictions following the Covid-19 pandemic had been eased. Staff should continue to develop cosy spaces, indoors and outdoors, so that children can rest and self-regulate their emotions.

Children benefitted from a range of measures to keep them safe, such as a secure entry system, secure gates, and fencing, as well as good communication between staff to ensure children were accounted for. There were systems in place to monitor the maintenance and repair of equipment, and risk assessments had been carried out to identify hazards and put safety measures in place.

Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection, supporting a safe environment for children. For example, regular handwashing and good cough etiquette.

Changing facilities for children did not meet good practice guidance to ensure hygienic changing procedures and promote children's privacy and dignity. The leadership team agreed that changing facilities needed to be improved. See area for improvement 1.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, the provider should review and improve nappy changing facilities, taking account of good practice guidance, "Nappy changing facilities for early learning and childcare services: information to support improvement"

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"If I require personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed" (HSCS 5.4); and

"If I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected" (HSCS 1.5).

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement 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.

Leaders promoted a clear vision for the service that focused on improvements and positive outcomes for all. Leaders told us of their plans to review the nursery vision to ensure it reflects the aspirations of children and families.

The leadership team were visible in the nursery and worked alongside staff to support positive relationships with parents. One parent commented, "The management team are extremely visible. We really feel we know the staff extremely well; they are so approachable and accessible".

Successes and achievements were celebrated and shared through daily conversations, floor books, newsletters and learning journals. Families' views were sought to inform development of the service. For example, parent consultations were used to inform future improvements and leaders published, "You said, we did" notifications to keep parents up to date with developments. One parent told us that feedback had been sought at the end of summer term and "It was great to see this communicated clearly to us at the start of this session and how they have/are going to go about acting on these changes". We suggested that leaders could further develop self-evaluation processes by increasing children's involvement.

Staff were initiating change by taking on lead roles at the service. They spoke enthusiastically about their lead roles in key areas, such as forest school, active bodies, and baking, and how they positively influenced children's experiences. Strong leadership supported staff to carry out their roles confidently and aspire to influence positive change; for example, by engaging in further education and courses. This supported positive 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.

The nursery was appropriately staffed to meet children's needs. Staff were kind and caring towards children which helped create a warm, nurturing environment for children.

Parents knew who was caring for their child and had the opportunity to build trusting relationships with staff. "Meet the team" postcards were shared with families prior to children starting nursery which supported good transitions. One parent told us, "As parents, it is extremely reassuring to feel as if the staff working directly with your children really know and genuinely care about them".

Staff rotas were planned effectively to promote continuity of care and good communication with families. For example, staff worked hours that reflected individual children's pattern of attendance when needed. As a result, children quickly settled into the nursery routine.

Staff were happy to be at their work and worked well as a team. They spoke passionately about their roles and talked about the team being "a family". Regular team meetings allowed staff to discuss children's progress and plan learning opportunities.

Staff had a good understanding of how children develop and learn. They interacted skilfully with children to support their interests. Children's ideas were followed which extended their natural curiosity and learning.

Staff had undertaken qualifications relevant to their roles and they engaged in continuous professional development. They were supported to reflect on their learning and consider the impact on outcomes for children. As a result, children were making good progress.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By the 19 April 2021, to ensure that there is proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users, the service must comply with the condition of registration which states that they may provide a daycare service to a maximum of 46 children aged 3 to those not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. Of those 46 no more than 30 may be accommodated in the indoor nursery building and no more than 16 may be accommodated in the outdoor service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event." (HSCS 4.14) and in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social

Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210) Welfare of users.

This requirement was made on 31 March 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

An action plan was submitted to indicate action that would be taken. The service regularly updated inspectors on progress and provided evidence of updating parents. During the inspection, we noted that the service was complying with the terms of their registration.

Met - within timescales

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?	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?	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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