

# Crosshouse Early Childhood Centre

## Day Care of Children

Playingfield Road  
Crosshouse  
Kilmarnock  
KA2 0JJ

Telephone: 01563 532 300

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
17 February 2023

**Service provided by:**  
East Ayrshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000142

**Service no:**  
CS2003016947

## About the service

Crosshouse Early Childhood Centre is a daycare of children service. The service is registered for 72 children from three years of age who are not yet attending primary school. It operates from premises adjacent to Crosshouse Primary School, in the village of Crosshouse in East Ayrshire. The service is provided by East Ayrshire Council and is managed by the head teacher of Crosshouse primary school, supported in the daily management of the service by a depute manager and a senior practitioner.

Children have access to a three linking playrooms and their own secure outdoor space. Children can freely move between indoors and outdoors. The centre is located in a semi-rural village and is within walking distance of local amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection. We visited the centre on 7 February 2023 and had meetings using information technology with management and staff on 8 and 14 February. We fed back to management on 17 February. 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 children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents and reviewed information parents shared with us by email.

## Key messages

Children were happy, confident and having lots of fun leading their own learning.

The management and staff team were happy at their work, motivated and working hard embedding the service's vision, values and aims.

Children were thriving as a result of consistently warm, responsive and nurturing interactions.

Children enjoyed calm, sociable and relaxed snack and lunch experiences.

Medication, allergies and dietary requirements, accident and incidents were well managed.

Staff knew children well and respected them as individuals.

Children benefitted from a well considered environment that reflected their stages and needs and provided lots of opportunities to relax in cosy spaces.

## 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

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Children were confident, happy, settled and having fun. There was lots of laughter and a relaxed and happy atmosphere. We observed all staff using nurturing and caring approaches, often responding to children's non verbal cues and readily providing cuddles and reassurance. This effectively supported children's well-being. Staff knew children very well and engaged with them respectfully, taking time to listen to them and recognising their feelings and views. We observed staff responding calmly and quickly to support children to resolve conflict, using quiet and respectful tones which helped children to manage their emotions.

A strong focus on supporting children's health and well-being was embedded in practice. The daily together time provided very good opportunities to promote relationships between key staff and children. All children knew who their key worker was, and sought them out when they needed support. Staff genuinely valued their relationships with families, and worked closely with them to agree ways of supporting children. All parents who responded to our questionnaire commented favourably about relationships and nurture. One said, 'The staff have been amazing, especially for myself. My child's key worker made the transition to nursery very easy. She is nurturing and very caring' and another said, 'My child speaks so highly of all the staff and we regularly hear their names at home. They all know lots about my child and I have seen amazing bonds formed over the past year'. As a result, children were settled, happy and had positive and close attachments with staff

Staff consistently encouraged and supported children to celebrate their achievements, for example by frequently offering high fives and lots of praise and displaying children's work attractively. Children knew what their targets were and told us about their prior learning. This was supporting children's self esteem and encouraging them to be active and enthusiastic learners.

We observed a calm and sociable lunch experience, where staff ate with children, modelling good habits and creating opportunities for them to develop language and social skills. Children were provided with support and encouragement and were respected as they were given time to eat at their own pace. Staff gently encouraged children to try new foods from the wide range on their table. Parents commented that their children had increased the range of healthy foods that they would eat since attending the centre. Children had opportunities to self serve and used real crockery and cutlery. The management of lunch experiences was helping children to develop healthy eating habits and important life skills.

All staff knew individual children's likes, dislikes and interests. This meant that they were able to plan and support next steps in learning. Staff were skilled at observing children's play and used support strategies sensitively. Key staff worked closely with other professionals to ensure children's needs were well supported, offering specific targeted support. Team around the child meetings reflected GIRFEC principles and provided effective collaborative targeted support. A range of information for each child had been gathered to develop written personal plans. This included specific health information which would support staff to plan individualised care. As a result, all children were supported to achieve their potential.

### 1.3 Play and learning

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Children were leading their own play and learning through a balance of planned and spontaneous activities. They were having lots of fun and were deeply engaged in their play experiences, indoors and outdoors. Choice and independence in where and how they played meant children were leading their own learning whilst having lots of fun.

Staff were developing very good observation skills, and knew when to support and help children to develop their play and when to allow children to do this themselves or with their friends. Planning approaches were child centred, responsive to children's interests and based on current best practice. Big Books and children's special folders effectively reflected children's thoughts, ideas and experiences. As a result, children's needs, views and interests were at the centre of planning, supporting children's learning and development well.

Children had direct access to the outdoor space, and could freely access this area for most of every day. Innovative approaches such as pictorial displays helped children to dress appropriately for the weather. This was helping children learn to be responsible and to benefit from rich outdoor play and learning experiences regardless of the weather.

Staff supported children through skilled observations, and supported learning through meaningful questioning, encouraging children to think about what might happen next. This helped to extend children's thinking and learning. Play experiences in all playrooms developed children's skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. Children were offered 'challenges' by staff, for example using a tablet to take photographs. The centre promoted positive approaches to risky play, with children accessing their own risk and challenging themselves. These approaches supported children to achieve their potential.

Children's opportunities to play and learn were enhanced through strong connections to the community. The service made good use of local space, using the local parks as part of their community walks. In addition the centre invited people who worked in the community to visit.

Children were confident telling us what they enjoyed about nursery. They were very familiar with where their special folders were kept, and excitedly told us about what they had been doing with their friends, prompted by the photographs and art work within their folders. Children led their own play, having lots of fun and independently making choices. Children's voices were strongly evident through floor books and wall displays. We saw children developing decision making skills, negotiating and turn taking. As a result children were developing resilience and lifelong learning skills through play.

Parents commented positively about the range of experiences their children enjoyed. One said 'There is a wide variety of learning activities within the nursery. All play based learning which is exactly the right kind of stimulation they need. We loved the idea of a nursery pet and my daughter enjoys the days when they have pets in visiting such as rabbits and ducks. It teaches them about caring for animals and about being kind'.

## How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

The setting was warm, welcoming, well maintained, had plenty of natural light and was well ventilated. It provided children with a friendly, welcoming space, that belonged to them, where they could play and learn, with support from caring and kind staff.

Staff took pride in providing spaces that reflected children's interests and sparked curiosity and exploration. Furniture and resources were of a good quality, and playrooms had been organised to offer children stimulation and challenge, and space to relax and unwind. The wide range of resources, including loose parts and natural materials, enabled children to lead their own learning, developing their curiosity, creativity and exploration. Careful displays of children's work recognised and celebrated their achievements. Children could easily select resources, adapt spaces and make choices about how resources were used. This helped children have a strong sense of ownership of their centre.

Children benefited from free flow access to a large, secure outdoor play area. Staff had been skilled and creative in developing this, for example by providing willows which children could weave in and out of. Staff recognised and valued the importance of children experiencing outdoor play daily. Wet weather clothing was readily accessible to children, which allowed children the opportunity to be outdoors as they chose. Staff carefully considered how to ensure children could experience a breadth of learning experiences that reflected their needs and interests outside. This included loose parts, spaces to be creative and to physically active. Parents were very happy with their children's outdoor learning experiences. One told us 'I ask my daughter everyday if she has been outdoors and she regularly has lots of outdoor free play. She loves the various equipment outside and has told me she "helped build things"'

Spaces were thoughtfully organised to give children opportunities to play on their own, in small or in large groups. Staff were responsive to children and worked well to ensure all areas were staffed appropriately to meet their needs. There were lots of cosy areas, which children used regularly when they wanted to relax. One parent told us 'At drop off time I notice a wide variety of resources and experiences for children to access. I also see various experiences my child has taken part in via the learning journals which supports her targets and development'. The centre's plans to further develop the entrance hall area for sharing information with families and the general purpose room will further enhance the environment.

We found good infection control measures were in place. Children and staff had good hand hygiene practice. This helped ensure children were safe and healthy.

## How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

### 3.1 Quality assurance is well led.

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

The management team had promoted a clear shared vision for the centre. Management and staff were committed to ensuring that children and their families benefitted from a safe, inclusive, nurturing and fun environment, where everyone feels valued, welcomed and respected.

Management and leadership approaches were motivating and empowering, with everyone involved in the centre supported and encouraged to develop leadership skills. A strong commitment to continuous improvement was evident. Quality assurance and routine monitoring of the provision and learning experiences were embedded in practice. Current best practice guidance underpinned effective self evaluation, with a strong focus on children's experiences and outcomes. This resulted in significant positive impacts on children's learning and experiences.

Regular communication with families took place through a variety of methods. This included online platforms, daily face-to-face discussions and regular personal plan meetings. This contributed to the positive relationships families had built with staff. Parents told us they received regular updates in person and online. They commented on the availability of the managers and the fact they knew their children by name. One parent said 'We have had many questionnaires. An example of one was when the ECC were developing one of their rooms and sent out a questionnaire for parent and child input'. As a result, families felt valued and included in children's learning. The service regularly consulted with children, supporting them to vote on things like resources and room layouts. Children were learning about the service's vision, values and aims, at the time of our inspection focussing on 'safe', which is one of the values. This ensured that children felt valued and included in the life of the centre.

The centre's improvement plan was regularly reviewed, to assess the impact and pace of developments. Information about progress was shared effectively with staff and parents. This helped to celebrate success and to maintain a positive ethos and motivation.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

### 4.3 Staff deployment

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

The deployment of staff within the service was well-managed to meet children's needs. The varying work patterns of staff were carefully planned to ensure continuity of care for children and their families. Staff communicated well with each other to ensure there was always enough support and supervision for children. They told children when they were leaving the room, helping them to feel secure.

Staff demonstrated a genuine interest in children and their welfare. Parents were very happy with the staff. One commented 'A fantastic nursery, lovely staff who go above and beyond. They clearly adore the children they work with and provide amazing opportunities for them'. Staff were professional and modelled respectful and supportive relationships. This supported a welcoming, inclusive and positive ethos.

Staff were highly motivated and clear about their roles within the centre. They worked very well as a team by sharing ideas and communicating effectively. Staff were confident in their leadership roles, regularly and effectively disseminating best practice to their peers. Staff told us they were listened to, felt valued and were fully aware of the improvement plan and their role in implementing this. Staff values, skills, experience and knowledge resulted in high quality experiences for children.

Parents told us staff were friendly and approachable and had built very good relationships with their child. One parent said 'I feel that the staff at Crosshouse nursery have went above and beyond to respond to my child's needs. I cannot praise them enough for their professionalism (yet kind and supportive) approach towards my family'.

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

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

Staff should ensure that children have daily access to outdoor play and learning. This is to ensure that the quality of care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment"(HSCS 1.32).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 June 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

This area for improvement was met. Children had daily access to high quality outdoor play and learning experiences. Please refer to key questions 1 and 2 for further information.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The manager should audit the centre's equipment and resources and furnish the provider with information regarding areas for improvement. Staff should be involved in the audit. This is to ensure that the quality of the environment is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment"(HSCS 5.22).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 June 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

This area for improvement was met. Equipment and resources throughout the setting had been developed and improved. Please refer to key question 2 for further information.

#### Previous area for improvement 3

The manager should now plan and implement a robust monitoring system to ensure consistency in infection prevention and control practice. This is to ensure that the quality of care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I benefit from an environment that is secure and safe"(HSCS 5.17).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 June 2022.**



**Action taken since then**

This area for improvement was met. Effective quality assurance systems ensured a safe and hygienic environment for children. Please refer to key question 2 for further information.

**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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