

Coylton Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 February 2023

Service provided by:
South Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003269

Service no:
CS2003017392

About the service

Coylton Early Years Centre is located in Coylton, South Ayrshire. It is attached to Coylton Primary School. The service is provided by South Ayrshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a daycare of children's service for a maximum of 70 children aged from two years old to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 10 will be 2 - 3 years.

Children aged 3 - 5 years have access to a very large, bright playroom and their own secure outdoor space; children can freely move between indoors and outdoors. Children aged 2 - 3 years have access to a smaller, cosy but bright playroom, and have their own secure outdoor space which they can freely access throughout the sessions. The centre is located in a rural village and is within walking distance of a local shop, park and village amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 and 9 February 2023 between 9:30 and 14:45. We gave feedback to the service onsite on 14 February 2023 at 11:00. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed and spoke with several children using the service
- sent out a family questionnaire and received 12 responses
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were having lots of fun and enjoying the resources and experiences available for play and learning.
- Children benefited from a staff team that valued learning through play.
- Staff and the management team placed children, and their families, at the heart of their work.
- Children experienced warm and caring approaches to support their overall wellbeing.
- Children could freely access the outdoors through the whole session.
- Staff had focused on a nurturing approach which supported positive outcomes for children.
- The management team had embedded leadership values across the service.
- Staff worked well together and were confident in their roles
- Children benefited from a staff team that were creative, skilled, knowledgeable and committed to the continuous 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?	6 - Excellent
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 evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced exceptional warmth and care from staff who knew them very well. Nurture and emotional wellbeing was embedded in the ethos of the service and was evident in all interactions between staff, children and families. The rich and meaningful emphasis on emotional wellbeing supported children to feel safe and secure. A number of children had recently joined the service. We noted the praiseworthy and nurturing approach that the staff team took to ensure these new children were happy, settled and included. Comments from parents included, "I love it here. I cannot sing their [staff] praises enough. You feel like your child is the only child here. It's like an extension of your family and they know your child so well."

The individual care and support needs of children and families were at the heart of the service and approaches were adapted thoughtfully to suit them. The colour monster was used brilliantly to capture children's feelings daily. This meant that staff were meaningfully able to chat with children about their feelings and thoughts, ensuring children were secure, confident and enjoyed positive relationships with the staff. As a result, children were well supported, able to express their feelings and therefore regulate their emotions. One parent commented: "I feel they [staff] really do put the children first all the time. I can hear and see staff talking with children and really having a giggle with them at home time and cuddles when they need them. My child just loves all the staff members as she talks about them fondly at home."

Personal plans were outstanding in meeting children's needs and supported high quality outcomes for each child. The management team and staff had developed a highly effective way of collecting this information; this was supported by the exemplary organisation skills that the service had. The plans were personal to each child and reflected the child exactly. Personal plans were regularly reviewed with parents to reflect children's changing needs and routines. Clear strategies were understood and implemented by all staff to ensure children's needs were met. As a result, the outcomes for children at Coylton Early Years Centre were extremely positive.

A continuous and effective cycle of observation, planning and assessment helped staff to understand what children needed. As a result, children were happy, confident, and making very good progress. One parent told us, "They [staff] adapt to what my child needs, and the progress has been unbelievable."

Staff had established impactful, collaborative and strong links with a range of professionals to help them to fully meet children's needs. Staff gave us examples of recent training which had inspired them to identify and support the challenges that may be impacting on the children from day-to-day. For example, training had helped them to recognise the importance of nurture, wellbeing and building children's resilience. As a result, children were confident, capable and having fun in the centre.

Children enjoyed mealtimes. They were relaxed and unhurried, ensuring a positive, sociable experience. Meals provided by the service were nutritious and met children's individual dietary requirements. Children developed their independence skills as they served their own lunch and poured their own drinks. One child told us, "Chicken curry is my favourite." Fresh drinking water was available for children throughout the session, which they could access independently to keep them hydrated.

Staff had an excellent understanding of children's health needs. Several staff were trained in first aid should children require medical assistance. Medication was stored securely, and permission had been sought to administer medication. The management team had developed exceptionally supportive family learning opportunities with parents to assist with further understanding of illnesses, and measures to take if their child was unwell. Management monitored medication records closely to ensure that they were effective, current and meeting the health needs of the children. As a result, children were safe and protected from harm.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were settled, happy and engaged in play experiences, both indoors and outdoors. All children had direct access to the outdoor learning environment and could freely access this area independently or with support. Staff told us they used a balance between adult and child-led experiences. Children were keen to share their favourite activities with us which included cutting using real scissors, building blocks, pretend play and playing outdoors. One child told us, "I love playing outside but I've got to put a suit on first."

Children were actively leading their play; they could make choices about what they wanted to do. This was supported by staff who skilfully interacted with children to promote their creativity and curiosity. They used effective questioning to extend children's thinking and learning.

Planning approaches were child centred and supported children to progress. For example, staff used provocations (resources or activities that promote thoughts, creativity and learning) to shape children's play and learning. Staff worked closely with the teachers to assess children's abilities and identify any support children required. This ensured that children were making progress in their learning.

Children had access to lots of resources and play experiences that helped develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, we saw children writing letters to each other, creating trains with the Bebo resources, and they excitedly produced playdough they had made. Children's writing was displayed throughout the nursery which built their self-esteem and encouraged them to talk about their learning.

The service is building strong connections in the community to extend children's opportunities for play and learning. For example, a joint community garden project with the local out of school care and the primary school, along with members of the local gardening group gave children opportunities to engage with cross generational community groups and enterprise initiative to sell the produce they grow. Although this project is still in its early stages, considerable work had already been undertaken to develop this great work.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a safe, comfortable and stimulating environment where they could play and learn. It was furnished to a very high standard throughout and careful consideration was given to creating spaces which felt warm and homely. Staff told us how they had used their knowledge and good practice guidance to create spaces which were appropriate for the emotional needs of the children and supported their stage of development.

Indoor and outdoor environments provided a very good range of well-considered and interesting open-ended materials. Creative approaches successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. Staff shared the ways they reflected on setting up and monitoring each play area. Ensuring that all play environments offered excitement, were richly resourced and appeared attractive to children led to motivating play opportunities.

Children benefited from challenging and fun experiences which took account of safety. Risk assessments were in place, and they promoted a safe and well-maintained environment. Identifying ways that children could further be involved in assessing risk would further help to develop their awareness of safety.

Effective procedures were in place to regularly review any accidents or incidents. Audits were regularly carried out to identify patterns of possible risks. This ensured the service was keeping children safe.

All children had access to well-planned outdoor play environments. Children were encouraged to play outdoors in all weathers and had free flow access from playrooms to the nursery gardens. Appropriate waterproof clothing was provided, and an exciting range of experiences was available. Children chose freely within different areas which included opportunities to play with water, learn about growing, climb, balance and make music. One child told us, "I love being outdoors, I love climbing." Using their imagination and being active supported children's wellbeing.

The service made very good use of available resources within the local community. Children's experiences were enhanced by visits to local parks and shops. Children had opportunities for high quality experiences in local areas. The nursery was in the process of establishing a local community garden in collaboration with other local groups. This helped children to feel a sense of connection to nature and belonging in their local community.

Infection control practices supported a safe environment and minimised potential spread of infection. Rooms were bright, clean and were ventilated throughout the day. Children were encouraged to wash hands frequently and at appropriate times. Established routines meant children were supported to be healthy.

How good is our leadership?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent, with outstandingly high performance in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The highest quality leadership helped build staff confidence and empowered them to influence and share responsibility for well-informed change. The fully embedded culture of continuous improvement was fully focused on children and families and was driven by the committed team. The impact of aspirational, clear and shared values was evident in the experiences provided and in the outcomes for children and families which were of a high quality. One parent told us "Coylton EYC [early years centre] is by far the most nurturing, caring, structured and happy nursery setting I have ever encountered." As a result, children and their families experienced a service managed by a team who were passionate about ensuring excellent outcomes for all children.

Children and families benefited from inspirational leaders who promoted shared leadership amongst the team. Staff were highly motivated and enthusiastic, and this positive attitude created a happy, nurturing environment with an emphasis on caring for each other. Leaders were very supportive and reflective. Discussions about practice and learning needs encouraged staff to develop their skills. This contributed to the positive experiences of children and families, with one parent commenting "I think the ethos and attitude of staff is amazing."

The enriched culture of learning, and providing staff with high quality learning opportunities, underpinned improvements which benefited children and families. Peer support and monitoring was also used well to ensure high quality play and learning experiences and consistent approaches were provided for children.

The service demonstrated that effective self-evaluation was embedded, continuous and influenced daily decisions in Coylton Early Years Centre. Regular meetings supported staff to consistently reflect well together. These meetings were well thought out, productive and effective in sharing local and national best practice guidance. One parent commented: "I feel that the nursery is run well from the top down, I feel that the team all know our child and they all have an interest in all the children and know them on an individual basis." Staff were inspired to assess children's experiences and outcomes and bring about rich and meaningful changes. As a result, children experienced high quality care and learning to support them to reach their full potential.

A highly effective programme of continuous and sustainable improvement was skilfully planned to ensure quality learning through play was achieved, such as the development of the outdoor areas. Children and families were actively encouraged to be involved in influencing change and shaping improvement. One parent told us "I feel listened to, and I feel like we matter." This meant that outcomes for each child were positive and highly considered.

Decisions for planned changes by the service took account of the relevance to staff, children and families. The outstanding management team had spent time listening to parents, children and staff, requesting their input to decisions and working to implement them. The management team had skilfully devolved leadership opportunities to staff which ensured that staff were invested in enriching the service and ensured they were well informed, up-to-date and aware of the reasons for change and development. The service had taken time to share changes and developments through an impactful 'you said, we did' display. Parents commented: "There is always a weekly roundup sent from the HT [headteacher], which is helpful", "Staff never come across as being stressed or disorganised" and "I love the communication between myself and the EYC." This management style, evident in Coylton Early Years Centre, had created an exciting culture where people felt valued and respected.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

4.3 Staff deployment

Appropriate numbers of staff helped to meet the varied needs of children in attendance. Effective use was made of the different experience, skills mix and knowledge of the staff team within playrooms. Staff were flexible and communicated effectively as children moved between play spaces. This ensured children's needs were met, they were supported and they felt safe.

Staff were deployed in a way that reflected the needs of children attending each day. Staff positioned themselves in the play spaces both outdoors and indoors to ensure they maintained children's engagement and wellbeing. Staff breaks were planned to minimise impact on the children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. Children benefited from this positive experience of continuity of care which allowed them to feel secure.

A strong and unique sense of community within the setting supported families. Parents praised how welcomed and involved they felt in the service. Parents comments included, "I trust the team and I'm more confident as a parent." They also praised the level of meaningful communication in which they were included and the ways they were kept informed of any changes. Parents told us that the development of their child and their relationship with them had been enhanced by the care, support and communication provided.

A robust monitoring and supervision process supported staff to meet children's needs. Use of local and national best practice guidance helped staff to develop and grow in their role and the staff team to develop as a whole. Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities which in turn ensured very good children's experiences. Meaningful support for staff wellbeing promoted positive attendance and meant that staff felt valued and respected.

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	6 - Excellent
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?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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