

Langlees Early Learning and Childcare Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 October 2023

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003015563

About the service

Langlees Early Learning and Childcare Centre is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 55 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of those 55, no more than 15 are aged two years to under three years and; no more than 40 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

The service is located in Bainsford, near Falkirk, and is based within the grounds of Langlees Primary School. There were two playrooms with a dedicated entrance, toilet, and changing facilities. Each playroom had direct access to an outdoor space, and local green spaces extended children's outdoor learning opportunities. A family space with kitchen, sensory room, office, and staff room provided additional space to support the wellbeing of children, families and staff.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 October 2023 between 08:30 and 17:15. 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, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children using the service
- spoke with parents and carers
- spoke with staff
- observed practice and daily life including staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents
- gathered feedback from families through a Microsoft Forms survey.

Key messages

- Children and families experienced an excellent service. A high level of inclusion in the service promoted their overall health and wellbeing.
- Highly skilled staff, led by an inspiring leadership team, worked well together to provide excellent experiences for children and families.
- Children's wellbeing and learning was supported by a calm, peaceful, and welcoming environment.
- Quality assurance systems and procedures led to excellent performance in areas of practice.

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?	6 - Excellent
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?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent, where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children and families.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children and families experienced an excellent service. A high level of inclusion in the service promoted their overall health and wellbeing. Highly nurturing relationships were developed from the introductory home visit and enabled children and families to feel loved and cared for. Strong and effective communication meant children and families were always included in decision making about the care and support they needed. The service encouraged most families to take part in a range of initiatives which significantly improved their health and wellbeing. A parent said, "I like how everyone's always happy and they care about you and the child, not just your child."

Children and families were always listened to and were encouraged to express their needs and wishes. Highly skilled and passionate staff were readily available, and created daily opportunities and a safe environment for sharing important feelings and information. A parent said, "Staff are very encouraging and nurturing to my girls. All staff engage excellent with me and my family."

Staff had high aspirations for children to achieve their potential and this was detailed in individual children's personal plans. The voice of the child and their family was visible showing that they were included and valued. Next steps in children's learning and development were effectively planned, and the story of the achievements of each child and their family were celebrated.

Children benefited from an excellent mealtime experience. Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried, enabling all children to enjoy eating at their own pace. Dedicated staff used a range of person centred communication strategies to support children to understand what to expect as they set up for lunch. This included Board Maker, objects of reference, and Makaton. Children chose when and where they wanted to eat, resulting in many children choosing to eat outdoors in the garden. We considered this as an example of sector leading practice. Children had developed confidence and independence when helping to set the tables and serving food. 'The larder' involved children in choosing and preparing additional food for lunchtime. Children told us about the scones they had made for lunch.

We acknowledged the excellent outcomes for children and families through their involvement in 'Marvelous Mealtimes at Home.' This group was developed to encourage families to join their children in cooking and eating a meal. Healthy eating, cooking, budgeting, and the importance of a hot meal were some of the benefits identified by families. In addition, families were provided with a slow cooker to take home along with knowledge and a range of recipes for use. When asked what they liked about the service, a parent said, "The cooking group on a Friday, and the support everyone gives me and my little boy." The service was sharing this excellent practice across the sector enabling more children and families to benefit.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were imaginative and curious as they explored the play and learning environment around them. Highly skilled staff supported children's play and inspired learning by ensuring a wide range of natural resources and loose parts were available. A child said they were painting with the brown muddy paint. They had mixed the mud and the water to the right consistency to enable them to paint a picture.

Children's numeracy and literacy skills were creatively supported across all areas of the play and learning environment. Outstanding opportunities for children to experience numeracy in nature had been developed by a highly motivated staff team. Recipe cards and different sized scoops in the mud area provided children with opportunities to measure and count as they mixed potions or made mud cakes. Expert advice from professionals had provided staff with knowledge and understanding that helped them create and sustain a rich numeracy and communication environment.

Children had fun playing with their friends and developing positive, respectful relationships. A group of children were engaged in their imaginative play. They had sellotaped cardboard together telling us that they were building a house. Approaches towards play and learning, including supporting and extending children's curiosity and interests in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), were excellent. This successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning experiences.

Staff had established strong partnerships with families and supported them to understand the importance of children's learning at home and in the service. A creative range of focus groups helped families to be involved across all aspects of their children's play and learning. Families participated fully with their children and were able to evaluate the difference attending groups made to them and their children. It was recognised that children and families' overall wellbeing was significantly enhanced. A major strength in the setting was the relationships staff had made with families and the local community.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children's overall wellbeing benefited from a calm, welcoming environment. Careful consideration had been given to the lighting in all areas. Harsh overhead artificial lighting was switched off. Instead, natural and sensory lighting created peaceful spaces. Some children preferred to take their shoes off. Staff had explored the benefits and recognised the positive sensory experiences for children. Children's wellbeing and learning was supported as a result.

Children's ability to think imaginatively and their sense of adventure and excitement was enhanced by a wide range of loose parts and natural resources. Staff used their observations of individual children's play, together with their sound knowledge of child development to change and enrich the play environment both indoors and outdoors. Children were busy and having fun as they learned through play.

Children's emotional development was supported by the quiet sensory spaces that were created within the nursery. Soft furnishings and sensory toys and books helped children to relax. Staff had an understanding and were sensitive to the needs of children when they wanted to go to these safe, peaceful spaces. Children were developing their ability to self-regulate their emotions and building resilience.

Children enjoyed regular active play outdoors. Family woodland visits meant parents were included in the outdoor fun. Staff shared information on how they could support children's safety in the outdoors and the benefits of being outdoors on our mental health and wellbeing. A parent said, "Really happy with extra play opportunity like woodland wanderers."

Children were supported to be healthy and safe through effective infection prevention and control routines. The environment was well ventilated, hand washing was embedded in practice, and regular cleaning took place. Children were included in undertaking risk assessments in all areas so that they were learning to stay safe. For example, children told us about the berries in the garden that were poisonous. The service had reviewed and developed robust safety systems and processes when children were indoors, outdoors, or in the local community. Staff demonstrated a keen understanding of Care Inspectorate's 'Keeping children safe - look, think, act campaign (SIMOA)' which is evident throughout daily checks and risk assessments. The setting could further extend children's understanding of how the service safeguards, protects, and supports children's wellbeing using props and visual cues.

How good is our leadership?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent, where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children and families.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Outstanding leadership promoted a shared vision for the service that reflected the views of children, families, and staff. The values statement was regularly reviewed to enable all families to have a view in shaping the service. Children, families, and staff described the service as a 'community family' that they agreed supported them to achieve their potential.

Children and families experienced high quality outcomes through the service being tailored to meet their rights, needs, and wishes. They were meaningfully involved in all developments in the service, showing that the focus was centred on listening and taking action based on their views. Families told us they felt they were consulted and could influence changes in the service. They said they had trusting relationships with the leadership team and had a high level of confidence in them. A parent said, "Leadership are very involved in the day to day activities and take part, not just sit in office. They have also been very supportive to both myself and my girls."

Staff had been inspired and supported to develop the confidence and knowledge to take an active lead on improvement priorities. Leaders had recognised individual abilities, strengths, and expertise, and this had contributed to high levels of satisfaction and professional growth. Staff health and wellbeing was a priority as the provider recognised the impact of the pandemic and the changes in Early Learning and Childcare as a result of the expansion. High quality and consistent performance was achieved and celebrated and management oversight ensured that the right staff were in the right place at the right time to support children. Excellent outcomes for children and families were delivered as a result.

Self-evaluation had enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support to meet the changing needs of children and their families. Staff engaged in reflective practice and understood how data collection evidenced impact and sustained improvement. The success of the food and clothing banks had led to families engaging with other services resulting further in improved outcomes including maximising household income and employability.

Self-evaluation had led to excellent performance and was built on the foundation of good practice guidance including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Care Inspectorate, A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare, and Scottish Government guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me. Families had an awareness and expectation for high quality service and outcomes as the documents had been shared with them and their children.

The management team had shared innovative approaches with other services across the local authority, and with a visiting delegate from education, social services, and health in Sweden. This offered opportunity for others to learn about very high performance across a wide range of care, play and learning activities.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring the service was appropriately staffed. Staff were able to spend time with individual children to support their choices, interests, and needs. We were able to see children enjoying interactions with staff that helped them to feel happy. Staff were flexible and communicated with one another in a respectful and supportive way. Children were developing confidence and skills to be the best that they could be.

A shared approach by the staff team ensured children and families were supported to achieve their potential. Children and families benefited from having opportunities to develop relationships with all staff in the service. Changes to staffing were communicated with families and planned in a way that minimised disruption to children's routines. Strong connections with staff meant children and families felt confident and relaxed in the service. The care and support they received had a positive impact on their overall wellbeing. We received lots of comments from families about how friendly and welcoming staff were. One parent said, "The staff firstly, they are some of the most kind and caring people I've ever met."

Staff used clear and effective communication to ensure the daily routines did not impact on children's experiences or their emotional wellbeing. The use of visuals to communicate what was happening prepared children for daily tasks including personal care and mealtimes. Staff supported each other and let children know when they were taking a break. Children knew who was available to help them if they needed support or comfort. This showed children were respected and valued and helped them to feel safe and secure.

Staff were passionate about the work that supported children and families and were keen to develop their leadership skills. Their experience and interests supported key initiatives in the service. They supported family groups, led on the development of outdoor learning, and managed the food and clothing bank. Staff said they felt valued because the management team listened to them and supported them to develop as practitioners. A motivated, committed, and knowledgeable staff team supported positive outcomes for children and families.

There was a clear process for mentoring and supporting all staff by using the skills and knowledge of the whole team. The induction process had been developed taking account of the Scottish Government published Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) National Induction Resource. A well performing staff team ensured consistent approaches in the care and support for children and families.

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?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent
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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