

# Lairdsland Early Years Centre

## Day Care of Children

Lairdsland Early Years Centre  
Southbank Road  
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East Dunbartonshire  
G66 1NH

Telephone: 01419552310

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
22 May 2024

**Service provided by:**  
East Dunbartonshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003380

**Service no:**  
CS2021000024

## About the service

Lairdsland Early Years Centre is located in Kirkintilloch. The provider of the service is East Dunbartonshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a care service as follows:

A maximum of 95 children not yet attending primary school at any one time.

- no more than 15 are aged 2 years to under 3 years and;
- no more than 80 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

Adult:child ratios will be a minimum of:

- 2 years to under 3 years - 1:5
- 3 years and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than 4 hours per day, or
- 1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 13 and Tuesday 21 May 2024. The inspection was carried out by two early learning and childcare inspectors 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 service registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- contacted families and staff through Microsoft forms to gather their views
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- We observed positive relationships between children and staff with lots of warm, caring interactions and engagement.
- Personal plans should be streamlined and more clearly defined with all care and support information for each child easily accessible.
- The management team should continue to support staff to identify and evaluate play experiences that children find engaging and challenging and to explore ways to involve children in identifying and assessing their own learning.
- The management team should continue with plans to extend learning using community facilities and resources and woodland areas for forest school activities.
- Staff were motivated and responsive to meeting the needs of children and worked hard to create a positive ethos.
- Staff welcomed the support from the management team. The provision of leadership roles and increased involvement in decision making helped to build positive working relationships.

## 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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

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

### Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support.

We observed positive relationships between children and staff with lots of warm, caring interactions and engagement. Care provided to children was personally responsive to their needs, for example, younger children were sitting with staff and staff were using kind and nurturing interactions. "Is that funny?", "Would you like to join in?" These comments on their play and actions supported children's communication development and helped them to feel valued.

Staff knew children well and had developed meaningful relationships which enabled them to support their learning and development. Staff were respectful towards children, taking time to listen and respond. Children who were upset were comforted with cuddles. Staff engaged effectively with children using appropriate language and questioning to extend discussion and learning. Children confidently engaged with us telling us about their friends and favourite activities. Staff supported children with their friendships, for example, encouraging children to sit together at lunch. This gave children a sense of belonging which positively impacted on wellbeing.

Parents were welcomed into the centre and had built good relationships with staff. The parents' forum had organised fundraising activities. Parents had attended stay and play sessions which gave them the chance to take part in activities with their children, encouraging and supporting their learning and development. Some parents engaged with the 'families connect programme' which provided lots of fun activities to support learning at home. The primary school worked closely with the early years centre to support this initiative for older siblings also. The service manager and depute recognised the importance of involving parents as key partners in their child's learning and had a clear plan in place to actively support parents contributions.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the use of personal planning. Staff had gathered information about children which was contained in personal care plans. Plans included information for each child linked to wellbeing indicators, reflecting the values and principles of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). 'All about me' information was recorded for each child. All plans had been reviewed with parents. We discussed personal plans with the depute and advised that they should be streamlined and more clearly defined with all care and support information for each child easily accessible. This would enable all members of staff to see what the child's strengths are and which areas of their development have been identified as needing extra support. (See area for improvement 1).

Children's learning journals were completed and reflected next steps for learning. We found that the quality of information recorded varied. The teacher, in conjunction with the depute head of centre, planned to review and monitor records of learning to support the new planning system in place and to share more information with parents. We agreed that this would help to promote parental awareness of actions that are being used in practice to help individual children achieve their learning goals.

Children were provided with a sociable experience during lunch time. The lunch area for older children was homely and welcoming, and staff sat alongside children to ensure that they enjoyed a positive experience. Children were developing their independence by pouring their own drinks and clearing away their plates

after lunch. Staff modelled positive language and manners when children asked for more food. We encouraged staff to consider how children could be more involved in setting up for lunch. Staff noted how much children ate at lunch, ensuring they were offered a substantial afternoon snack if required. Younger children in the 2-3 room sat at one small table which meant that staff couldn't easily sit alongside children to fully support a sociable lunch experience. The depute responded to this positively by offering to put another lunch table in place.

Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs. Several staff were trained in first aid should children require medical assistance. We found that the system of medication required to be reviewed to ensure better organisation and safe administration of medication. The senior early years worker responsible for this area responded positively by sharing proposed new medication templates. (See area for improvement 2).

A child protection policy and procedures were in place. There was a designated child protection officer and staff had received training. This ensured they knew how to respond to concerns about a child.

Parents' comments included:

"Much improved communication since current depute head of centre started"

"Both my children are well supported and very happy at Lairdsland"

"Staff are friendly and always chat when I come to collect my child"

"All the staff in the centre are excellent. Great at letting us know what's going on with my daughter"

"I would like more of a detailed handover. Also more updates on learning journals"

"It would be great to have more documentation of what they are learning or what their interests are on the journal or in paper form".

### **Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning.**

We observed children having lots of fun with good quality play, learning and development opportunities on offer. Most children were empowered to lead their play and learning through the support and interactions of staff. More experienced staff took time to extend conversations with children about their play and used some well-timed, open ended questioning to further extend and challenge thinking and learning. Children's interests were recognised and scaffolded. We found that some staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences. Some children had made an aeroplane from loose parts in the courtyard area. To consolidate learning children were making passports and talking about where they would like to go on the aeroplane, looking at and reading relevant storybooks.

Children moved confidently around the nursery, choosing where to play and freely using resources. This approach created opportunities for children to explore their world in their own way and helped foster creativity and imagination. Children's play supported numeracy and literacy, for example; children were using a counting ladder in the garden, counting watering cans used to water strawberry plants, children were discussing how to keep cars on the construction track they had made in the courtyard area, experimenting and using other resources to problem solve, children were talking about the length of worms they found in the garden and where they lived. Books were available across the nursery and opportunities for mark making and playing rhyming games.

Staff were consistently reflecting on the use of space to ensure children were supported in their play. The design of the nursery environment had previously created a degree of challenge for them in ensuring all children were meaningfully engaged in play. However, staff were making good progress with this. Children

played independently and in small groups. We saw them relaxing with friends, playing imaginatively and enjoying activities outdoors.

A variety of resources were available to children both indoors and outdoors. Some learning provocations were set up to spark children's interest, stimulate thoughts and ideas and encourage questioning, for example, loose play materials and planting. Children had begun to access community resources such as the library. There were plans in place to provide more regular planned outdoor play opportunities within park and woodland spaces beyond the limitations of the nursery setting. The depute confirmed that this was a focus of future play and learning as well as professional development opportunities for staff to support this.

Some members of the staff team were experienced, skilled practitioners whilst others were recently qualified or recruited. We discussed how the management team could further develop the recent team building opportunities and training to support all staff to implement current best practice guidance in early years. We also asked the management team to continue to support staff to identify and evaluate play experiences that children find engaging and challenging and to explore ways to involve children in identifying and assessing their own learning. This would provide a strong base for children to begin to think for themselves and become creative learners and critical thinkers.

Parents' comments included:

"Play experiences are child led and there is a wide variety on offer"

"My children particularly enjoy active play, woodwork and exploring outside"

"I know there are plans to include more exploration of the local community"

"I would like more outings and opportunity to explore"

"Winter proofing of space. More staff. Garden open more regularly".

## Areas for improvement

1. Personal plans should be streamlined and more clearly defined with all care and support information for each child easily accessible. This would enable all members of staff to see what the child's strengths are and which areas of their development have been identified as needing extra support.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

2. The system of medication should be reviewed to ensure better organisation and safe administration of medication. This should be in accordance with the Care Inspectorate guidance, Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

## How good is our setting?

**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as 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 experienced a setting which was clean, inviting and welcoming. The play areas benefitted from natural light and ventilation. Children had lots of space to freely move around indoors and outdoors. Furniture and resources were of a good standard and organised to promote free flow play.

The design of the indoor/outdoor environment was a key strength within the service offering children a range of quality experiences. Children had the freedom to run around, develop their physical skills, be creative and enjoy quieter moments indoors. The availability of open-ended resources enabled children to engage their imaginations, develop life skills and spark curiosity. As a result, children were motivated, engaged, confident and having fun.

Staff had created some homely spaces for children to relax. The courtyard area had been reorganised to provide larger spaces for children to move around and cosy spaces to help children practice self soothing and feel safe and secure. Play spaces reflected children's interests and provided a range of opportunities for active play and learning. We saw staff helping children to use resources in their own way to develop their play and match their own interests and intentions.

The management team were committed to continuous involvement of staff in planning and decision making about the play environment to ensure the best outcomes for children. We discussed how opportunities for learning in the courtyard area and playrooms could be maximised with additional resources, creating a rich learning environment, for example, the woodwork area should be in use at all times. The management team should continue with plans to extend learning using community facilities and resources and woodland areas for forest school activities.

Children could access toilet facilities within the playroom. Where children needed support, this was carried out in a designated changing area meaning children's dignity and personal preferences were respected.

There were playroom quality assurance checklists and risk assessments in place to monitor areas and ensure safety and security for children. This meant that children's activities were not compromised and they were supported to enjoy challenging, fun experiences. We asked the management team to monitor staff numbers and positions in different play areas to help identify and minimise risk to children within the setting, both indoors and outdoors.

Accidents and incidents records were completed and shared with parents. Monthly audits were carefully completed to identify any areas of potential risk or concern.

Children's information was stored securely within the office and children were monitored by staff when using IT equipment. Children's personal information was safe and protected. The premises and resources and equipment were well maintained. Infection prevention and control practices, including food preparation were satisfactory.

Staff commented on areas within the setting which could be difficult to manage when supporting children with additional support needs, for example, the height of the gate to access the roof area, doors providing access to the outdoor area and areas of the garden where clear vision is compromised. The management team were aware of these issues and were taking steps to resolve them.

Parents' comments included:

"We are incredibly lucky to have a facility like this in the area and to have such wonderful staff running it."

## How good is our leadership?

### 4 - Good

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

#### **Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.**

The management and staff team were committed to delivering a quality service for children and families. To support improvement the management team had developed a centre action plan, an improvement plan and quality assurance overview. Quality assurance processes to evaluate the quality of provision were in place. The service was gathering feedback from children and their families to plan further development and improvement of the service.

Regular management team meetings were held with the manager providing very positive support to the depute. Good progress had been made in building the staff team and management shared their intentions to continue to focus on this as well as supporting staff relationships and seeking the views of staff for future planning.

One to one support meetings had been held with staff over recent months. Regular full staff meetings were organised.

A Quality Assurance monitoring calendar was in place. This included a range of areas such as monitoring of learning journals, transitions, new children, new staff, personal plan updates, champion roles, peer observations and an environment audit.

The management team had successfully completed the short term action plan which was put in place to address the recommendations from the previous inspection.

These strategies helped to promote a shared vision and culture of shared responsibility. Consequently team morale had greatly improved with staff telling us they felt valued, appreciated and had a sense of belonging. Staff were more involved in decision making, had responsibility for leading aspects of provision through their champion roles and had improved access to training and development opportunities.

Staff were motivated and responsive to meeting the needs of children and worked hard to create a positive ethos. Staff were keen to involve children and parents in the life of the centre.

## How good is our staff team?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

#### **Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment.**

Staffing levels were satisfactory and supported delivery of good care. At the time of inspection, the service did not have a full complement of staff. The provider was actively addressing this, seeking to build a consistent staff team to promote continuity of care for children. Staff were eager to have a full staff team to alleviate the challenges associated with the layout of the building and subsequent supervision and engagement of children in learning.

Management continued to work hard to build the staff team and use their knowledge, expertise and experience to fully support children. They acknowledged that there was still work to be done in fully establishing new systems and processes recently put in place, for example, staff rota, staff meetings, training and champion roles.

Staff welcomed the support from the management team. The provision of leadership roles and increased involvement in decision making helped to build positive working relationships.

Improved access to training and organised in service days gave staff a better understanding of their responsibilities and the knowledge and skills they needed to do their jobs. Staff had completed training such as Lego based therapy for autism, child protection, aspire leadership, child development, co-regulation and de-escalation and attachment in the early years. Staff wellbeing, team building, curriculum planning and self evaluation had been discussed during in service days. Staff had opportunities to influence and progress the service improvement plan.

Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communication with families. Senior staff and keyworkers were available to chat and exchange information with parents. Parents could contribute to children's learning journals and follow play and learning activities.

Staff communicated well with each other using walkie talkies and worked together to ensure supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. Some staff told us that they had not completed an induction process or had been given a mentor for some time after starting work in the service. Some staff commented that they would welcome more staff to enable them to meet the needs of children who required additional support.

We shared this information with the management team who were committed to fully supporting the staff team.

Staff' comments included:

"We have good relationships with parents, good communication, good bonds and trusting relationships"

"It can be difficult to connect with families due to the size of the centre"

"I feel the garden area needs some attention in regards to safety"

"Although there is always enough staff to be in ratio for the number of children it can often be quite short when all areas of the nursery are open"

"Our new staff over the past month or so have received their induction closer to the beginning of their starting period at Lairdsland".

## 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

The management team should continue to support improvement in the service by implementing quality assurance processes that involve, staff, parents and children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and

transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 May 2023.**

## Action taken since then

The management team have made good progress in implementing quality assurance processes.

## Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should continue with plans to achieve a full staffing complement and build the staff team. Staff should have opportunities to engage in training and development to assist them to support children well.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent, skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 May 2023.**

## Action taken since then

Some progress has been made, but this remains an ongoing area for improvement.

## 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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