

Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Whitdale Early Years Centre (Nursery) Day Care of Children

55b Whitedalehead Road
Whitburn
Bathgate



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: West Lothian Council

Service provider number: SP2003002601

Care service number: CS2003016152

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

Contact Us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

www.careinspectorate.com

 [@careinspect](https://twitter.com/careinspect)

Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	5	Very Good
Quality of environment	5	Very Good
Quality of staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5	Very Good

What the service does well

The children benefit from a wide range of experiences which support their learning and wellbeing. Indoor and outdoor environments are safe and stimulating. Parents and carers have opportunities to share their views and suggestions and can become involved in their child's learning. Those parents who provided comments as part of the inspection process spoke positively about the service. Management and staff work closely with staff in the early years centre which is based within the same premises.

What the service could do better

Staff should consider how they can use children's personal learning journeys (PLPs) to better reflect partnership working.

Revised medication procedures should be implemented, in line with current guidance.

What the service has done since the last inspection

New resources had been provided, both indoors and outdoors. Staff had worked hard to increase child participation, implement more responsive planning and develop outdoor learning in particular.

The service continued to implement planned improvements, in line with identified priorities, including improved literacy and numeracy.

Conclusion

By continuing to effectively monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery, and by carrying out any further improvements which are identified, the manager and staff will be able to maintain and improve the quality of the service.

1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Prior to 1 April 2011, this function was carried out by the Care Commission. Information in relation to all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

The service is provided by West Lothian Council. The headteacher is the designated manager. The deputy headteacher had been temporarily appointed as acting headteacher and was in post at the time of our visit. A principal teacher supported the headteacher in the management of the nursery and she worked closely with a team of early years officers and pupil support workers.

The nursery is based within its own self-contained accommodation in the early years centre. The children also have access to very good outdoor facilities.

The nursery is registered to accommodate a maximum of 60 children, from the age of 3 years upwards who are not yet attending primary school. At the time of inspection, there were 86 children registered to use the service, of whom 48 were present during the morning and 29 during the afternoon.

The conditions of registration require the nursery to comply with the staffing ratios stated in the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of care and support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of environment - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection visit on Wednesday 23 March 2016. The inspection was carried out by one inspector who was present in the service for approximately six hours.

The service submitted an annual return during February 2016, as required. The nursery self assessment was most recently updated in September 2015.

We asked the service to issue questionnaires to parents, in order to allow us to take account of their views. We received 11 completed questionnaires.

We issued questionnaires to staff, two of which were completed and returned to us.

We looked at elements of the following four quality themes during our visit:

- Care and support
- Environment
- Staffing
- Management.

We gathered evidence from a number of sources, including the following:

- discussion with management and staff
- observation of staff/child interaction
- observation of the environment
- children's personal learning journeys (PLJs)
- other records, including medication and accident/incident recording

- information for parents
- selected policies and procedures
- comments from children
- comments from parents.

We have taken account of all of the above information when writing this report.

We assessed practice through looking at how the service provided positive outcomes for children using the SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included) wellbeing indicators which were developed by the Scottish Government. (Information on SHANARRI can be found at www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/people/young-people/gettingitright).

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may

consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

A self assessment was submitted in 2015. This reflected strengths of the service and areas for improvement. Following the inspection, we confirmed grades of very good (grade 5) which the service had awarded through the self assessment process.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We observed happy, settled children who were familiar with nursery routines and were engaged in their learning. Some of the children talked to us about what they were doing in nursery.

Children's individual comments included the following:

"This is chicken noodle soup." (imaginative play in water tray)

"I'm a policeman. He's going in the jail." (outdoor play using a partially enclosed hut)

"I'm going fast. Peep peep!" (using cars in garden)

"What's your name?"

"Can you come and play with us again?"

"Do you want to see my treasure?" (pirate game)

"Can you hold this for me while I climb up?"

"Look through this - you can see the roof!"

Taking carers' views into account

We asked the nursery to issue questionnaires to parents to enable them to comment on the service. We received 11 completed questionnaires. Feedback from parents was positive overall which confirmed that parents were satisfied with the service. For example, in response to the statement 'Overall, I am happy with the quality of care my child receives in this service', nine parents strongly agreed and two agreed. Further information is included under the individual statements in this report.

Individual comments from parents' questionnaires included the following:

"My grandchild has got more confidence since starting nursery. She was very shy but she has now started talking to the teachers and the other children."

"Whitdale early years centre is one of the best and most professional nurseries I have come across."

"My daughter has three lead teachers at afternoon nursery. Although this does not appear to have affected her learning opportunities, it can be quite confusing for her."

We spoke to four parents/carers during our visit. They confirmed that their children were happy and settled in nursery. Individual comments included the following:

"I've got no problems at all. My child loves it."

"I can talk to staff every day and can look at my child's folder."

"I can see a difference. They're learning a lot."

"I'd feel able to speak to staff if I had any problems."

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 2

“We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.”

Service Strengths

We found that the service was performing at a very good level in relation to this statement. We looked at ways in which children's health, wellbeing and learning were supported and the opportunities they had to exercise choice.

Child led activities enabled children to work at their own pace and follow their own interests. We saw that most of the children were familiar with nursery routines and confident in choosing how they would like to spend their time. Staff were respectful to the children and showed interest in what they had to say. They used praise and encouragement effectively to promote positive behaviour and to acknowledge the children's achievements. The children were encouraged to be caring and considerate towards one another. As a result there was a calm, purposeful atmosphere which was conducive to children learning and achieving. Children could choose to work alone, or in a small group. Staff supported them well, allowing them freedom to experiment in their play and intervening or joining in when appropriate. We saw that staff asked questions of the children, to extend their learning.

Children were enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and were happy to talk about their experiences. Many of the activities promoted the children's literacy and numeracy. We saw that the children enjoyed free play before going into their groups for registration and storytime. Most of the children listened well. Afterwards, staff initiated discussion with the children about the story they had heard. They had the opportunity to practise counting and talk about the characters. Some of the children spent time in the wet area where they experimented with water play, having fun pouring and measuring. A number enjoyed spending time in the 'outdoor' room which was positioned between the main room and the outdoor area and offered opportunities for children to play energetically and experience a free flow between indoors and outdoors.

Planning, linked to the curricular areas, showed that staff considered how the children responded to various activities and that they refreshed various areas of the nursery, taking account of children's interests. Staff had used floor books and talking tubs to stimulate discussion and capture children's comments. We saw for example, that the children had discussed fire safety. Comments included the following:

"Fire can burn the house down."

"Fires are hot and dangerous like the cooker or iron."

"At nursery the alarm goes off and we all go outside."

"The fireman is spraying water on the fire."

There had been considerable focus on improving outdoor learning for the children. Most of the children chose to spend time outdoors where they experienced a stimulating and inviting environment. Several contrasting areas provided a range of learning opportunities. Many children were active and played energetically with their friends. We saw that the children were confident in selecting what equipment or props they wanted to use.

Staff offered a range of healthy snacks including fruit, scones, pasta, crackers and cheese and pancakes. Snacks and other food tasting sessions encouraged children to try new foods. Children could choose when to have their snack. They were reminded to wash their hands before finding their snack card.

This encouraged their independence and helped them to learn to recognise their own name. The children chose what they would like to eat from a selection of cereal and fruit. Some chatted with their friends while they sat at the snack table. The children were responsible for washing their dishes before cleaning their teeth. Regular toothbrushing should, over time, have a positive impact on the children's health.

Staff had formed very good working relationships with children and their parents. Personal Learning Journeys (PLJs) were used to record information about children's learning and parents were invited to meet with their child's keyworker to share these. The majority of parents who submitted questionnaires confirmed that staff assess children's learning and development and use this to plan their next steps (one didn't know). Similarly, most confirmed that staff seek their child's views and take account of them when planning (two didn't know).

We saw that staff were identifying and planning for children's individual needs. The nursery worked closely with parents, and other professionals when appropriate, so that children who may need any additional help could be appropriately assessed and supported. The management team confirmed that systems were in place to ensure that children's progress was tracked and support measures reviewed and assessed. In some cases, the nursery was able to provide additional staff to help children with specific needs to fully benefit from their experience of nursery.

Areas for improvement

The children had previously been involved in woodland activities. The nursery was not able to offer this at the time of our visit but hoped to do so again at some future date.

We discussed ways in which staff could effectively capture dialogue which takes place with parents, as this would contribute towards partnership working and help staff to be aware of parents' wishes.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 2

"We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected."

Service Strengths

We found that the service was performing at a very good level in relation to this statement. We sampled risk assessments, discussed and observed nursery practices and took account of feedback from parents.

A secure entry system prevented unauthorised access to the nursery and ensured that staff were aware of the presence of any visitors. Arrivals and departures were managed in a way that reduced the risk of any child leaving unaccompanied. The outdoor areas were fully enclosed.

The nursery was well organised and appropriately equipped and furnished to meet children's needs. Staff supervised the children effectively. We saw that they were able to explore the available usage areas and had opportunities to learn about risk and how to keep themselves safe as they played. They were encouraged to learn to be responsible, for example, by tidying up when finished playing. This helped reduce the risk of trips and falls.

The nursery had recently obtained a selection of outdoor storage units which housed a wide range of props and resources to promote the children's learning. These were easily accessible and staff encouraged the children to investigate what was available.

The accommodation was well maintained and welcoming to children and their families. Any maintenance issues were reported to the council so that they could be addressed. Staff had taken account of potential hazards and had developed written risk assessments.

They checked the indoor and outdoor areas on a daily basis to ensure that they remained safe.

Children had access to hand-washing sinks and were encouraged to learn good hygiene routines, for example through reminders to wash their hands before snack and after visiting the toilet. Staff confirmed that they used personal protective equipment (gloves and aprons), when appropriate. Parents were encouraged to comply with recommended exclusion periods for infectious illness. This had a positive impact on children's health as the risk of the spread of infection was reduced.

A record was kept of any accidents which occurred and this information was shared with parents who received a brief written report. First aid was provided by trained staff. Staff confirmed that there had been no significant accidents.

In response to the statement 'The service is a safe, secure, hygienic, smoke free pleasant and stimulating environment', nine parents strongly agreed and two agreed. This showed that those parents were satisfied with this aspect of the service.

Areas for improvement

Nappy changing took place in a cubicle in the children's toilets. Various items were stored there, which meant that the area was cluttered and less welcoming to the children than it could be. The manager agreed to review storage in the nursery. We also advised her of up to date nappy changing guidance which is available on our website.

Some written risk assessments which we saw did not appear to have been reviewed in recent years; however, the manager confirmed that electronic versions had been reviewed and updated.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 3

“We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.”

Service Strengths

We found that the service was performing at a very good level in relation to this statement. We looked at staff practices, qualifications and experience and took account of feedback from staff and parents.

Staff were skilled and motivated and worked very well together to meet children's needs. As a result, children were appropriately supported, safe and included. Children were comfortable in the setting and confident in approaching staff when they needed help. Staff encouraged the children to work independently but were on hand to offer support and extend their learning.

Staff were qualified and experienced which contributed towards favourable outcomes for the children they cared for. They had formed positive working relationships with the families who used the service, which helped ensure that the needs of the children were understood and met. We asked staff if they felt confident in their roles. Those members of staff who submitted questionnaires confirmed that they had confidence in their own skills and that the service provided good support to the people who used it. Nine parents who submitted a questionnaire strongly agreed that staff had the skills and experience to care for their child and support their learning and development, while two agreed.

The staff team had access to a range of national guidance documents which supported their day to day work with the children, including the following:

- Curriculum for Excellence
- Pre-birth to three
- Child at the Centre 2
- Building the Ambition
- National Care Standards
- Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings.

Staff impressed as willing to reflect on their practice and consider how this impacts on the outcomes experienced by the children. They took ownership of specific aspects of the curriculum, on a rotational basis and confirmed that they had been able to access training since the last inspection which had helped them in their day to day work.

Training carried out by members of staff included the following:

- Building the Ambition
- GIRFEC
- Taking maths outdoors
- Early phonological awareness
- Developing early literacy indoors and outdoors.

Early years staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), as required. (The SSSC is responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training. Its role is to raise standards of practice, strengthen and support the workforce and increase the protection of people who use services). Staff confirmed their awareness of the SSSC codes of practice to which they are expected to adhere.

Staff met together to share information, undertake planning and consider further developments. They were committed to making best use of the limited time which was available for this purpose.

Areas for improvement

Staff should continue to familiarise themselves with new national guidance as this will help them to develop their practice and maintain and improve outcomes for children.

Staff planned to further involve the children in planning their learning and to further embed responsive planning.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 4

“We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.”

Service Strengths

We found that the service was performing at a very good level in relation to this statement. We had discussions with management and staff and took account of written information. Strengths identified under previous statements are also relevant to the grading for this statement.

The service is provided by West Lothian Council which has a well-defined management structure. This ensured accountability within the service and meant that management and staff were supported in their roles. Quality assurance visits from the education officer and heads of other centres complemented the internal processes which were in place.

The headteacher was the designated manager for this service. At the time of inspection, this role was being carried out by a temporary acting manager. (We have since been informed that the manager has returned to his post.) A depute and principal teacher supported the manager in leading the staff team.

Members of the management team impressed as being accessible and staff felt supported. They were working together to maintain and improve the quality of the service. Processes were in place to support self-evaluation. Priorities for improvement had been identified, in line with the overall priorities for the authority as a whole and the needs of the nursery. An improvement plan was in place.

Staff were fully involved in evaluating their work and contributing towards improvement. Staff who completed questionnaires confirmed that they were asked for their opinion on improvements to the nursery.

Similarly there was a commitment to involving parents. A variety of methods had been used to keep parents informed about the work of the nursery and seek their views about the quality of the service. The management team was committed to further developing partnership working. All of those parents who completed questionnaires strongly agreed that the service had involved them and their child in developing the service, for example asking for ideas and feedback.

Staff were aware of their obligation to protect children and followed established care and welfare procedures. This meant that any concerns were noted and shared with a senior member of staff so that the need for follow up actions could be assessed. The nursery liaised with other agencies, when appropriate, and this was evidenced through nursery records. The management team were broadly aware of regulatory issues including required notifications which must be made to the Care Inspectorate. We directed them to the relevant documents which provide more information about this, for future reference.

Areas for improvement

We looked at medication procedures. We asked the management team to ensure that a record is maintained of any medicine administered and that this is signed by the parent, to show that the information has been passed on.

We discussed the need to review children's personal information no less than every six months and to update this as appropriate. Parents were asked to confirm enrolment information on an annual basis. The management team agreed to increase this to twice annually.

Medication recording did not fully comply with current guidance; however the management team felt that this would be resolved following the implementation of newly devised procedures.

The council was considering extending the nursery provision in line with current policy for preschool childcare and education. We reminded the manager of the need to submit a notification to the Care Inspectorate regarding any proposed building work, prior to its commencement.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

There is no additional information.

9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
7 Mar 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 5 - Very Good
31 Aug 2010	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good Not Assessed Not Assessed

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Contact Us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

www.careinspectorate.com

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