Central (English) Nursery
Day Care of Children

Central Primary School
Kenneth Street
Inverness
IV3 5DW

Telephone: 01463 233 906

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 December 2023

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003013528

About the service

Central (English) Nursery is a day care of children service comprising of a breakfast club, nursery and out of school care. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 60 children at any one time from three years up to primary school age, of whom no more than 45 are not yet attending primary school.

The service is situated in a standalone building within the grounds of Central Primary School in the city centre of Inverness. It is close to shops, green spaces, and other amenities. The premises comprises of a large entrance hallway, two playrooms, toilet facilities, a dining hall and office. Children also have access to a dedicated outdoor space and school playground.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 December 2023 between 08:40 and 17:15 and 6 December 2023 between 08:00 and 13:40. 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
- received questionnaire feedback from two families and spoke with five families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• A strong culture of continuous improvement brought about positive change for children and families.

• Children experienced genuinely kind, caring and warm interactions. A very nurturing ethos had been created where children were loved, safe and secure.

• Children experienced fun and joy throughout their day. They were well supported to develop skills in language, literacy and numeracy.

• Staff were knowledgeable about children's individual development. Observations and next steps could be better recorded to capture children's progress and achievements.

• Improvements had been made to the environment which had a positive impact on children's engagement and play and learning experiences.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

Children and families were warmly welcomed on arrival which helped children to settle. They experienced genuinely kind, caring and warm interactions from staff which created a very nurturing ethos. Families told us that staff were 'very caring', 'nurturing' and 'fantastic'. Children had built strong attachments with staff and sought out support from them. They were offered cuddles and reassurance with warmth and affection which helped them to feel loved, safe and secure. Positive, trusting relationships had been built and as a result, children were happy, relaxed and having fun.

Children experienced unhurried mealtimes with a relaxed, positive atmosphere. Their independence was encouraged through opportunities such as preparing snack and self-serving during mealtimes. This helped to build their confidence and life skills. Staff were attuned to children's cues, for example, they recognised if children were hungry and were responsive to their needs. Children and staff enjoyed eating and chatting together at lunchtime which promoted good eating habits. The leadership team had identified that there was scope to further develop the snack experience to be more social.

Staff were very knowledgeable about each child as an individual and their holistic needs. This meant that children experienced care and support which was compassionate, responsive, and right for them. Nursery children's overall wellbeing was very well supported through effective use of personal planning. Children attending out of school care had personal plans in place however, they would benefit from being more involved in developing and reviewing these to ensure the information reflected their changing needs and interests.

Children and families were valued and respected. Staff worked proactively with families and other professionals which supported them to identify strategies of support tailored to children's individual needs. Staff effectively and consistently used these strategies which supported children to achieve their potential.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children experienced fun and joy throughout their day. They laughed and giggled during play and when interacting with staff. They were enabled to make choices about their play and learning and moved confidently between the playrooms to engage in a variety of experiences.

Children's literacy skills were very well supported. They independently engaged in mark making and enjoyed reading stories with staff. Staff sang throughout the day which created a positive atmosphere and supported children's language development. Staff supported children to communicate in a way that was right for them and at their own pace. Children were supported using a wide range of strategies such as the use of Makaton and visual aids. Personalised strategies were effectively used to support children's individual communication development. Opportunities for numeracy were naturally woven into children's play and learning experiences. For example, staff encouraged children to count when building with blocks. Staff used open ended questioning to support and extend children's thinking. There were opportunities for this to be developed to enhance the quality of children's play and learning experiences.

Children were involved in shaping their play and learning. They contributed to floorbooks with comments and drawings about their experiences. However, there was limited evidence of children's learning recorded. Staff were knowledgeable about children's individual development. Whilst observations of play experiences were personal to each child, they did not consistently capture learning. Children's next steps had been identified however, these were not always measurable or followed up. As a result, there was the potential for children's achievements to be missed. This had been identified as an area for development by the leadership team and was a focus for improvement.

Children attending breakfast club and out of school care had lots of fun. They were empowered to actively lead their own play and had ownership of the club. Children experienced opportunities to play independently and cooperatively with others which supported them to build positive relationships. A selection of interesting and exciting resources gave children opportunities to engage in different play types including imaginative and active play and to develop life skills. One family told us their child had begun cooking at home as a result of the skills learned at the club.

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 bright, clean, and welcoming environment. Families told us the setting was well furnished, comfortable and homely. Playrooms had been redecorated in neutral tones which created a calm space. The setting was safe, and well maintained. Consideration had been given to ensure the environment was secure, for example, with additional security measures on gates in the outdoor area. Staff were vigilant about where children played and ensured that children were accounted for.

Improvements had been made to the indoor and outdoor environments to create spaces with more interesting and engaging experiences such as a range of creative and sensory play. The addition of loose parts, natural materials and real life resources enhanced children's play and learning experiences. This promoted creativity, curiosity and problem solving. Children independently accessed materials which enabled them to have more choice in their play. Resources to support children's learning in literacy and numeracy had been added to different play spaces, however, there was scope for this to be extended. Staff were in the process of auditing the environment to identify where further improvements could be made.

Staff were responsive to children's interests and needs, for example, they provided a tepee for children who liked to spend time in enclosed spaces. As a result, children had a safe space to retreat to. Children made good use of cosy spaces where they enjoyed relaxing on beanbags or under blankets. One playroom could be further developed to provide more opportunities for children to rest and relax.

Children had fun outdoors, experiencing risky play opportunities where they could push their own boundaries and build self-confidence. For example, children built obstacle courses with loose parts which provided them with opportunities to test their balance. Children attending out of school care were encouraged to think about how to stay safe before going outdoors. This helped them to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Infection, prevention and control measures were effective. Children were well supported to wash their hands at key times throughout the session. This helped to keep children safe and healthy. The nappy changing facilities were cluttered on the first day of inspection which increased the potential spread of infection. This was addressed immediately during the inspection.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Leaders and staff had high aspirations for children and families which was promoted in their shared vision. Families told us that they were confident the setting was well managed. A culture of continuous improvement had been established with all staff and leaders demonstrating a commitment and passion to make positive changes for children and families.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in the development of the service. For example, families had the opportunity to attend stay, play and learn sessions. They provided feedback following this to inform future improvements. Leaders were continuously reviewing how they engaged with children and families to ensure they were actively involved in influencing change.

Robust quality assurance processes supported improved experiences and outcomes for children and families. Staff were fully involved in self-evaluation and reflected well together which enabled them to bring about positive change. A cycle of improvement had been embedded with key priorities identified and actions followed up to assess whether changes resulted in improvements. Effective use of audits and monitoring informed the development of staff practice and improvements to the environment. As a result, children experienced high quality care and support which was tailored to their needs.

How good is our staff team? 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 4.3: Staff deployment

Children and families experienced a warm welcome as staff greeted them on arrival. Strong relationships had been established with children and families which supported positive transitions and promoted opportunities to share important information about children's needs. Most families were very happy with the communication; however, a few told us they would like more information about their child's day at pick up.

Staff worked together as a team and communicated well to ensure children were effectively supervised and supported. They were responsive to children's needs and moved flexibly throughout the play spaces to provide support, interaction, and engagement. On occasions, staff were providing support to individuals and small groups of children simultaneously. Whilst staff did this to the best of their ability, this meant that they were not always able to fully support and extend children's play and learning.

Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. This created a nurturing environment for children and families. Consideration had been given to the differing skill mix and experience of staff to ensure that children received high quality care and support.

The staff team were stable and consistent, which ensured families knew which staff were supporting their children. Effective arrangements were in place in the event of absence, with consistent supply staff where possible. This supported the continuity of children's care.

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

To ensure children receive high quality experiences through interactions, the manager should support staff to develop their skills in quality interactions. This should include, but not limited to:

(a) Support and extend children's thinking and problem-solving skills during their play and learning experiences.

This is to ensure 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 and 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 23 November 2022.

Action taken since then

Children experienced interactions which supported them in their play and learning. Staff used open ended questions which promoted and extended children's thinking. The leadership team had plans in place to continue to support staff to develop the consistency of high quality interactions.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Children should benefit from a learning environment that is rich in opportunities for them to explore, be creative and problem solve. The manager and staff should review and develop the environment to make it more homely, stimulating and fun.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smell' (HSCS 5.20).

This area for improvement was made on 23 November 2022.

Action taken since then

Improvements had been made to the environment which enabled children to explore, be creative and problem solve. As a result, children were engaged in their play and experienced fun and joy. Cosy spaces had been developed to create a more homely and nurturing space. Children made good use of these areas to rest and relax.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can 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.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.