Mallaig Nursery/Sgoil Araich Mhalaig
Day Care of Children

Mallaig Primary School
Mallaig
PH41 4QX

Telephone: 01687 462 420

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 April 2022

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003013564

About the service

Mallaig Nursery/Sgoil Araich Mhalaig is registered to provide day care for up to 30 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery provided both English and Gaelic medium nursery classes.

The nursery classes were based in two rooms within Mallaig Primary School. Each of the rooms had a kitchen area and had access to their own toilet facilities. The playrooms both had direct access to their own enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery classes also had access to the main school playground and the school gym.

What people told us

The children present during the session were observed as being very happy and relaxed in the care of the staff. There was a very good rapport between the children and staff which allowed for natural and open communication. The children were all engaged in a range of activities throughout the session, both on their own or as a group. Being outdoors was particularly popular with the children and they enjoyed the range of activities available there.

The parents who offered feedback were extremely happy with the nursery and the quality of the care and support offered to their children. Parents felt that the staff knew the needs of the individual children and supported them very well. Communication and information sharing was seen as very good. Comments made included:

'I absolutely love my son's nursery.'
'I am consistently impressed by the high-quality care that the team deliver on a daily basis.'
'She absolutely loves going and often begs to stay in later! The staff, I could not speak more highly off.'
'We love getting our updates on class dojo. They do so much with the children and it is just such a happy environment.'
'We are very happy with the GM Nursery. Nursery teachers very approachable, any issues resolved quickly, such a caring nursery. Can't fault anything.'
'staff did everything they possibly could to prepare my daughter for starting. Since then, her confidence has soared and she has learnt so much during her time there.'
'The staff are friendly and welcoming and always offering varied learning opportunities which we get to see in the learning portfolios. We are able to share experiences from home.'
'I have nothing negative to say about the nursery and staff and would recommend to other parents.'

Self assessment

We did not request a self-assessment from the service as part of this inspection. We assessed the service's improvement plan and quality assurance processes as part of our evidence gathering.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed

Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

During the inspection we evaluated two quality themes, Care and Support and Environment. Both themes have been evaluated as very good. We found that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

The children were all very happy, settled and relaxed during their time in the nursery. They experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff who supported their care needs. Staff were responsive to the needs of the children and offered comfort and cuddles when required. This supported children to feel safe and secure during their time at the service.

Staff were all aware of and responsive to the individual care needs of the children attending. Each child had a personal plan in place which contained information necessary for staff to meet their needs and ensure consistency and continuity in care routines. Staff had established good working relationships with families and also worked in partnership with other professionals to ensure that they met any specific care needs.

We observed the children having lots of fun both indoors and in the outdoor play areas. The children were very engaged in their play in a purposeful and meaningful way. Children were encouraged to follow their interests and curiosities and lead their play experiences. Staff offered appropriate levels of provocation to extend the children's learning. They used skilled, open-ended questioning to extend children's curiosity, problem solving skills and promote development of imagination. We saw the children all very engrossed in their play in the larger outdoor area accessible from the original playroom. The children confidently took part in water play, painting and a more adventurous climbing activity up a tyre slope which involved them having to risk assess.

The children experienced positive and relaxed meal and snack times. They were able to have lunch at a pace which was right for them. The children had their lunch in the school canteen before the primary school children arrived. These were very social events where the staff also sat with the children and chatted with them. The children received appropriate levels of support and independence skills were promoted.

The nursery was well maintained, clean, bright and very welcoming. The manager and staff continued to develop the playrooms to create a calming, cosy and neutral environment. Both the indoor and outdoor environments offered a very good range of learning experiences. Good use was being made of natural, open ended resources both indoors and outdoors. Children were able to direct their own play and activities in a way that they chose.

Children attending the service were kept safe through the various systems the manager and staff had in place. Staff explained that they completed daily visual checks before the children arrived as well as at the end of the day. We sampled the risk assessments the service had in place and found that the manager and staff were very vigilant in their care of the children.

Children benefitted from access to a well-resourced and carefully set out indoor play space. We saw children who explored happily and were engaged in their play. Consideration had been given to the variety of activities and experiences on offer to stimulate the children's curiosity and imagination. Resources were well matched to the developmental stages of the children and promoted their learning. Children were able to independently select resources of their choice and lead their own play. Resources provided supported developing skills and enhanced children's opportunities to progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Staff

routinely reviewed children's use of resources and areas to make sure that children were engaged and challenged.

The outdoor spaces provided children with a wide range of opportunities to stimulate their imagination, encourage children to take turns, share and problem solve. The both playrooms opened directly onto their own outdoor space and allowed for free flow. The outdoor play areas were well organised, maintained and children had access to a variety of engaging, creative resources for example, a mud kitchen, digging area, loose parts resources, water play, numeracy and literacy resources and mark making.

What the service could do better

Staff were all aware of the individual care needs of the children attending. As part of the inspection, we looked at the personal plans for children in each of the playrooms. Several of the personal plans contained only limited information. We discussed with the management team, the need to ensure that all personal plans were kept up to date and routinely reviewed. There should also be evidence that parents were fully included in the regular review of their child's personal plan.

In response to the introduction of increased funded hours for children, the nursery had increased in size and now used two playrooms. Management and staff recognised that the newer room and its significantly smaller outdoor play area required some improvements to offer the same experiences for children as the original playroom and its corresponding outdoor area. The manager explained that the staff had various ideas as to how the outdoor area could be improved. They had already introduced a mud kitchen, a small water play activity and a planting area. By increasing the resources this would encourage children to explore and develop their problem-solving skills, promote curiosity and more imaginative play. The installation of an outdoor tap would be very useful and would allow the children to independently access water rather than staff and children having to carry water through the playroom to the outside water activities.

We discussed with the staff and the management team how they might make lunchtime a more family experience and extend the opportunities for the children to develop their independence skills, for example serving themselves veg, salad and drinks. We signposted the management team to useful best practice guidance including 'Food Matters' and 'Setting the Table.' The meal experience could also be improved with replacing the plastic trays with proper crockery.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
26 Apr 2019	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed
19 Apr 2016	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
13 May 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
18 Nov 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing	6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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