Gairloch (Gaelic) Nursery
Day Care of Children

Gairloch Primary School
Auchtercairn
Gairloch
IV21 2BP

Telephone: 01445 712 165

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 August 2023

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003013586

About the service

Gairloch (Gaelic) Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 10 children, from the age of three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is operated by Highland Council. It is located within Gairloch Primary School and the head teacher manages both the Gaelic medium and the English medium nurseries. The nursery premises consists of a playroom with kitchen area, large reception area with cloakroom facilities and notice boards which it shares with the English medium nursery. There is an enclosed outdoor play area directly accessible from the playroom. The nursery can also access the school playground and playing fields for energetic physical play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 31 August 2023. 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, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service
- spoke with the one member of staff and the manager
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff.
- Children were very happy, confident and settled and were engaged in a range of activities.
- Improvements had been made to the indoor setting.
- Staff highlighted the need to develop further the outdoor space.
- Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care and effective partnerships.
- Staff were committed to providing a quality service to children and their families.

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?	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 were happy, settled and having fun as they played alongside or with friends. We observed that positive attachments had been formed between staff and the children which contributed to children developing a sense of belonging. Children experienced warm, kind nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. This contributed to children feeling happy and secure and promoted an inclusive care setting where all children mattered.

Staff were welcoming and friendly with an enabling attitude and, as a small service, knew children very well. To support children to be happy and confident, staff had effectively used 'Being me' personal plans to ensure children's needs were captured and considered. These documents ensured that everyone had a clear understanding of children's individual needs and how to support them to reach their full potential. This meant that all children were respected and valued as individuals. We reminded the service to ensure that they regularly reviewed and updated personal plans with parents.

Children and families benefitted from a service that valued the importance of establishing strong working relationships with families to support children. Staff worked in partnership with families when developing personal plans and support strategies. This ensured that children received appropriate levels of consistent care and support. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time, via an online platform and there were opportunities for parents to spend time in the nursery.

Children experienced positive snack experiences which were relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Staff were aware of any allergies or dietary needs which helped them to keep children safe. Children were supported to develop their independence skills when pouring drinks and self serving snacks. The nursery children had their lunch in the main school canteen. Staff sat with children, chatting and modelling healthy eating, creating opportunities for children to develop their language and social skills.

Staff were aware of their role and responsibility to safeguard children. They had completed child protection training and fully understood the procedure to follow should the need arise. The staff had a knowledge and understanding of the Care Inspectorate SIMOA project - Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act. This contributed towards children's health, safety and wellbeing. We reviewed the setting's medication policy and procedures. We found medication was stored securely and out of reach of children.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The children were happy and engaged in their explorative play and actively led their play and learning throughout the day. They moved freely between the indoor and outdoor environments to explore and develop their life skills, learning and imaginations. Being outdoors was particularly popular with the children. We saw the children enjoying taking part in a water play activity which involved them having to problem solve, work together and take turns.

Planning approaches were child led and followed children's interests and needs. Play spaces were well organised and resourced. Children were offered stimulating and interesting experiences which promoted curiosity, imagination, problem solving and collaborative play. The children were interested in space and had built their own cardboard rocket which they could both get in. They told us what they could see when they looked out the rocket windows. For the majority of the time, children benefitted from uninterrupted play, allowing them to become absorbed in their play and have fun. This increased children's happiness and engagement.

Staff understood their role in supporting children's development and were adding further value to children's play and learning through their carefully considered interactions. Staff were skilful in their interactions with the children and supported their interests and curiosities which extended their learning. Staff interactions encouraged children to think independently and to reflect; as a result children were respected, valued and achieving. Staff naturally engaged with the children and used simple Gaelic words and language which they supported the children to repeat.

We recognised good quality play, learning and development was taking place throughout the inspection. Gaelic language, literacy and numeracy were naturally incorporated into most play areas within the nursery. Children's Gaelic vocabulary and communication skills were being promoted and they were gaining confidence and making progress. They had the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills and mathematical language while taking part in cooking activities, playing with real life resources in the home corner or investigating outdoors. For example, staff used open ended questions and provocation to support children at the water play to explore mathematical concepts around capacity, volume and time.

Staff ensured that parents were well informed of children's learning, progression and next steps and were encouraged to give their feedback. Weekly updates and photographs were posted on the online platform and shared with parents. These updates were very much appreciated by parents.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator 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 clean, bright and welcoming nursery. The playroom was comfortable and homely with plenty of natural light and good ventilation. Ensuring a healthy and safe environment for the children was a priority for the manager and the staff. There was a system to report any repairs and damaged items were promptly replaced. Infection prevention and control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. There were appropriate risk assessments in place which promoted the safety of the children as well as daily checks of the premises.

Since the previous inspection, staff had reviewed the layout of the playroom and the storage of resources. Children now benefitted from access to a well-resourced indoor play space. Children were able to independently select resources of their choice and lead their own play. 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 reflect children's interests, stimulate curiosity and imagination, offer challenge and extend their play. There were some open ended and natural resources available. We discussed with the manager and staff how they could further extend the range of loose parts and open ended resources to enrich the learning environment.

Children had opportunities to rest and relax in a safe, cosy area. This enabled children to seek out a calm area where they could have some individual time if needed. This supported children's emotional wellbeing. Staff and children also used this area for reading stories. We saw the children present enjoying time in the cosy area looking at books together.

Staff had a good understanding of the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall wellbeing. They had daily free-flow access to the enclosed outdoor area which they shared with children from the English medium nursery. Free-flow access enabled the children to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. Children could move equipment between the indoors and outdoors, which ensured play and learning was not interrupted. There was a range of resources including a mud kitchen, wheeled toys, water play and a planting area readily available for children to access. The manager and staff explained that they were currently developing the outdoor area and were hoping to introduce more loose parts and open ended resources which would offer children high quality outdoor play and learning.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The management and staff fully engaged with the inspection process, demonstrating an ethos of continuous improvement. There was a clear vision for the service which resulted in a positive working environment, where staff felt confident to share ideas to initiate change and were encouraged to share the responsibilities. The manager and the staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure positive outcomes for children. This was highlighted by the improvements which had been put in place since the previous inspection, for example the improvements to the playroom.

The manager and staff had made use of best practice guidance 'How good is our early learning and childcare' and 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare', to support their ongoing evaluation of their provision and improvement journey.

Since the previous inspection, a more robust system of quality assurance had become embedded within the service. There was a quality assurance calendar in place that ensured purposeful audits of various aspects of the nursery were routinely carried out.

The provider had reduced the management time allocated to manage the nursery. This impacted on the manager's ability to undertake their role effectively. However, he continued to monitor the setting and observe staff practice to ensure children receive high quality play and learning experiences. The manager also met with staff to discuss the continuous improvement of the service to secure progression and positive outcomes for children. The Gaelic medium and English medium nurseries were small, therefore the staff for both settings had joint team meetings with the manager on a weekly basis. Team meetings supported staff to develop self-evaluation skills and help to plan for improvement.

The manager recognised the importance of involving children and parents in the evaluation process. Involving children and their families meaningfully in the continuous improvement of the service contributed to building strong, trusting relationships and them feeling included. Regular communication with families took place through a variety of methods, including daily face to face discussion, questionnaires and online platforms. Parents were also very welcome to spend time in the nursery. The service had reintroduced stay and play sessions which parents all much appreciated.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Due to the very small number of children attending the service, there was only one member of staff. At the time of the inspection the nursery operated for two days each week. For the remaining days, the children either attended the English medium nursery which operated from the same building or attended another local provision. The member of staff also worked in the English medium nursery for three days, which promoted continuity of care.

The staff were skilled, kind and nurturing. They were motivated and committed to providing a happy and supportive environment for children. They were warm, caring and sensitive in their approach, which promoted a happy and secure environment where children were encouraged to lead their own play and learning. They were responsive and respectful of children during interactions and play which supported children to feel safe, secure and happy. Children enjoyed spending time with staff and were comfortable in their company.

Staff recognised the importance of developing strong and secure attachments with children and how skilled interactions supported children's play and learning. They had a good knowledge of children's individual developmental needs and were able to respond appropriately. Staff made use of effective questioning to extend children's thinking and problem solving skills. They understood how children's play could be extended when using open ended materials.

Busier times of the day, such as lunchtime, were planned for. The children from both the Gaelic medium and the English medium nurseries had lunch together in the main school canteen. The staff from both nurseries worked well together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with all the nursery children whilst allowing staff to each have a break.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

The manager should develop and implement an effective system of quality assurance to monitor and improve all areas of practice and improve outcomes for children.

In order to achieve this the provider should:

a) develop and implement a rigorous quality assurance programme
b) implement regular effective support and supervision for all staff
c) involve staff in the systematic evaluation of their work and the work of the service
d) put clear plans in place for maintaining and improving the service
e) ensure the manager effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation, 2011 SSI 2011/210 - Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing.

Timescale : 31 October 2022.
This requirement was made on 6 May 2022.

This requirement was made on 6 May 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement
Since the previous inspection, a more robust system of quality assurance had become embedded within the service. There was a quality assurance calendar in place that ensured purposeful audits of various aspects of the nursery were routinely carried out.

The manager and staff were able to confidently explain to us how all stakeholders were actively encouraged to be involved in the ongoing self evaluation of the service. They discussed the current action points which had been identified for the service.

This requirement has been fully met.

Met - within timescales

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	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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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