Auchinraith Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 March 2023

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015270

About the service

Auchinraith Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care to 24 children. The age range of those children is from aged 3 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school.

Care is provided from the nursery within Auchinraith Primary School, located within Blantyre, South Lanarkshire. The service is close to local shops, schools, transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 7 March 2023 between 08:30 and 16:10. Feedback was provided on Friday 10 March 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with four people using the service and 12 of their family
- spoke with nine staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with one visiting professional.

Key messages

- Children and families were supported in a holistic way.
- Clear and focused plans were helping to improve outcomes for children with additional needs.
- Children rights were respected. They experienced a nurturing, warm and engaging environment.
- Some improvements were needed to ensure that the environment and resources were well-maintained.
- Staff should continue to reflect as a team to ensure play and learning opportunities for children are of high quality.
- There was strong leadership in place driving quality and ensuring improvements were well led.
- Staff were a professional and committed team with capacity for and commitment to the delivery high quality care and learning.

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?	5 - Very 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 quality indicator as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and Support

Staff were aware of children's personal preferences and individual needs. It was evident that strong connections were established. Staff interactions with children were warm, nurturing and supportive. They were consistent in their approach when supporting children. Parents told us "My child's keyworker always updates me on their progress on activities they have got involved in".

Staff knew children well and planned for their care in partnership with parents through personal plans, which were reviewed regularly. Parents told us they had the opportunity to talk to keyworkers about children's care saying, "I've had meetings with my child's key worker to set goals for my child to achieve in nursery and at home which was to grow confidence and I can definitely say they have". Another parent said, "The settling in period was great, my child's key worker and the team leader couldn't have been more supportive of me as their parent". Staff told us they were reflecting on the best approach to store personal planning paperwork. This would ensure everyone had easy access to information needed to support improving outcomes for children and we agreed.

Opportunities were available for children to lead their learning and influence the spaces available. For example, many children were interested in role play and dressing up. Staff had recently reflected on the layout of the room to support this interest and provide ample space for children to further explore this. This meant that children were confident, happy and had a sense of ownership in the service.

Children's needs were met through individual targeted support. Staged intervention and additional support plans were in place for individual children where needed and was helping to improve outcomes. Various external professionals were involved in supporting children such as educational psychology, health visitor and specialist support teachers. Staff told us working in a collegiate way with external professionals ensured children were getting the right support from the right person in the right way when they needed it. A visiting professional told us "Auchinraith nursery class provides a nurturing environment for children. Staff are welcoming and share information well to support improving outcomes for children. They are happy and confident to ask about support for children they feel may need it. Staff engage well with strategies and advice provided and where this is not having the desired impact, they will week guidance and support to review and find a suitable alternative to help individual children".

Children experienced an unhurried and calm snack and lunch within the nursery. Some opportunities were available to develop skills in self-serving and pouring through the day. Staff told us lunchtime was a developing area and they were continually reflecting to ensure it was used as an opportunity to engage in high quality interactions with children, helping to create a pleasant atmosphere while children ate with friends and we agreed.

Staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They participated in regular training and systems ensured they were confident in recognising and responding appropriately to any concerns.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children benefitted from play opportunities that supported the development of their skills in language, literacy and numeracy and these were delivered in a holistic way. For example, group strategies and games suggested by speech and language professionals were being used and were helping to improve communication for children who were non-verbal or had English as an additional language.

Flexible learning pathways for individual children ensured they experienced quality outcomes. Some parents were involved in assessment, multiagency and partnership working to create plans for children. Frameworks for learning were tailored to help support children where needed. A parent told us "We have the support and encouragement of all the staff. My child really enjoys their time in nursery and always tells me all the wonderful things they get up too".

There was a mix of skills and expertise amongst the staff team. As part of the service's improvement planning staff were involved in training to support the delivery of high-quality play and learning interactions and experiences for children. There were some missed opportunities to support children's creativity, depth of learning and curiosity and we encouraged the service to consider the importance of a good balance of spontaneous and planned play experiences that promote this. However, we observed elements of this training being applied skilfully in practice in a meaningful way. Continuing to reflect as a team and provide these provocations and opportunities for children would support high quality play and learning.

Learning was responsive and children's needs and interests were at the heart of this approach. Children were happy and confident in their play. For example, a group of children were interested in exploring story books. Staff supported by using character voices, facial expressions and by being at children's level as they told the story. This type of learning ensured children's imagination was sparked, they were engaged and having fun. We could see that all children's learning was progressing.

Staff told us the service was on a journey with planning for children's learning. This was consistent with our findings. One parent told us "My child's learning journal could be updated at least once a week just to give us an insight as to what they are doing weekly" and another said, "I can see learning for myself often on the learning journal, which is great and is updated regularly with pictures and details of what the children have been learning about". Following a discussion, we encouraged staff to keep reflecting as to how best to offer and present learning in a manner that was engaging for children and accessible to staff and parents.

Children's achievements and successes were celebrated within the nursery and the wider community of the primary school. The nursery valued this sense of community and staff were clear in their vision for improving outcomes for children taking a holistic and long-term approach.

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.

The service was clean and well-ventilated with lots of natural light, providing a welcoming environment for children. Parents agreed and told us "Staff are amazing and really go above and beyond to help the children feel safe and provide a settled environment" and "The environment and the nursery are always kept clean and tidy".

Children were protected from harm through a variety of safety measures. For example, a secure entry system and a variety of risk assessments. Staff ensured children were always accounted for, particularly when moving around the setting. This ensured children were safe and secure.

We identified some improvements were needed in the playroom. For example, some furniture and equipment was worn and in need of replacing, the carpet was beginning to fray and walls needed re-painted. We discussed ways in which this could be achieved. This had already been identified by the service as part of their long-term improvements and initial steps to action this were taken before the conclusion of the inspection. The improvements identified would ensure children have a homely and inviting environment to play and learn in and ensure they are given the strong message that they matter. See area for improvement one.

The indoor and outdoor environments were set up to support children to free flow between different areas. Children's current interests were considered when arranging the different play spaces. One parent said, "I would like to see more loose parts materials for outdoors". Staff told us and we agreed that access to a wider range of resources would provide greater choice and quality in children's experiences. See area for improvement one.

While all toilet and changing areas were clean and well-ventilated with suitable handwashing facilities available, we identified occasional inconsistencies in how best practice for infection prevention and control was being applied. To reduce the potential transmission of infection, we asked the management team to review the storage of some items in nappy changing areas and the monitoring of handwashing and nose wiping.

The garden provided opportunities to climb, dig and explore senses through challenge, nature and risky play. The space was well organised and included a nurture hut which provided children with a quieter space to relax. Staff told us this was supporting children's emotional wellbeing.

A variety of policies supported a well led service and were contributing to keeping children safe. For example, such as child protection, administration of medication and complaints.

Areas for improvement

1. To provide a welcoming place for children to play, the provider should ensure that the environment and resources are well-maintained. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring fixtures and fittings are in a good state of repair and children have access to a good variety resources.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices.' (HSCS 5.21) and 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.22)

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 quality indicator as very good.

Elements of the service 2022/23 improvement plan priorities reflected some of our findings on staff training and planning for children's learning. The manager and staff as a team were committed to bring about positive outcomes for children through regular and robust self-evaluation.

A parent told us they were "Very happy with the quality of care my child receives" and another said, "Staff are always very caring and nurturing towards the children and very approachable too". This helped demonstrate a well led service.

Robust quality assurance processes were in place. This was having a positive impact on staff practice and improving outcomes for children. Staff told us they were involved in reflecting individually and as a team and acted towards improvement. We agreed that continuing to audit and monitor in this way would contribute to maintaining a high quality well-managed service.

Successful two-way communication methods to engage with families were embedded such as day to day chats, monthly updates and parent / carer evenings. This meant that strong and trusting relationships with families had been established and were supporting meeting the needs of children.

Parents were welcomed into the service daily and had a variety of opportunities to spend time in the service such as attending stay and play and a brew and a bleather sessions. These events were supportive and information was shared on areas including safe sleeping and play. This supported families to meet their child's needs and parents were grateful for this partnership approach telling us "I have always felt the staff are all very approachable, really care and listen to you and I have always felt comfortable to do so" and another said, "Staff have helped to build my child's confidence and I got advice from the staff".

As a rights respecting service staff worked hard to ensure children's rights were at the core of planning and quality assurance. Staff were consistent in ensuring children's voices were heard and listened to in order to improve outcomes for children and the service. For example, children were involved in weekly in the rights respecting group with children from the primary school. They were involved with their parents in reviewing the vision, values and aims focusing on creating a culture of respect, resilience and responsibility. This ensured children had a sense of ownership and belonging.

The views of families were actively sought and supported ongoing improvement. The manager and staff used several strategies to seek input such as a suggestion box and asking for feedback and thoughts during events. This had created a support network for families to access. A parent told us "We have been welcomed in plenty of times for stay and play and been included" and "I would feel confident approaching the staff as they are always on hand to listen to any worries parents may have".

How good is our staff team? 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 quality indicator as very good.

Deployment of staff was strong. Careful consideration had been given to the support and supervision of both staff and children. Staff communicated continually during daily tasks and responsibilities. This ensured children were safe and had quality experiences across the whole day.

Distributed leadership roles such as health and wellbeing, literacy and nurture champions were helping to ensure children accessed a wide variety of experiences. Staff understood the importance of regular catch ups and meetings to regularly evaluate the quality of the service and any improvements needed. Best practice guidance to support better outcomes for children were used as the benchmark for practice. Parents told us "I have 100% trust in my child's care and development" and "My child has always had the most amazing relationships with all the staff there, as have I".

Staff took part in training that led to improvements in children's experiences. For example, training in interactions with children and nurture had been put into practice and was helping to build quality into children's experiences throughout the day. A parent said, "My child has come on leaps and bounds with confidence since starting at Auchinraith".

Staff demonstrated a shared vision and were working hard to achieve consistent high-quality care and learning for children. Working well together they created a safe and welcoming environment for children. They were motivated, happy to be at work and committed to their role. One staff member told us "In response to completing a training course about the first five years of children's lives, a resource pack was purchased which has allowed me to share information to support families with issues including toilet training, managing challenging behaviour and establishing positive sleep routines". Parents acknowledged the commitment of the staff team telling us "When my child started at Auchinraith their nursery key worker came to meet us before the first nursery visit and made sure they were familiar with them beforehand" and another said "The work the staff all put in is just invaluable. I would recommend this nursery and school to anyone".

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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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