Carluke Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Belstane Road
Carluke
ML8 4BG

Telephone: 01555771621

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 December 2023

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015278

About the service

Carluke Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care to 70 children aged two to not yet attending primary school. Of those no more than 20 are aged two to under three years old.

Care is provided from the nursery within Carluke Primary School, Carluke, 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 12 and 13 December 2023 between 08:00 and 16:00. Feedback was provided on 13 December 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 10 people using the service and 18 families
- Spoke with 16 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with visiting professionals

Key messages

- Staff were warm, nurturing and knew children well
- Interactions were supportive, encouraging and well timed
- Children were happy, content and having their needs met. The mixture of age groups was well managed
- Additional support plans were detailed and some strategies identified were observed during inspection
- Children's interests and needs were at the heart of staff practice throughout the day
- Parents were very happy with the partnership working and care of their children. They felt included and valued

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?	5 - Very 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? 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.

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Children's rights were respected. Their successes, achievements and differences were shared and celebrated. Staff were committed to delivering a high standard of care through nurturing approaches through positive relationships and supporting children's wellbeing. For example, moments of achievement were recorded on wall displays, in personal plans and when sharing and celebrating individual moments of excitement and success with the wider group of children and staff.

Parents were encouraged to be actively involved in decisions about their child's care and development. They told us "The staff all work collaboratively, any key information in relation to my children's development is shared within the team so that they can all support them" and "My child's key worker is great, they have formed a good bond with them which makes me feel at ease and I know they are well looked after". Personal plans were created using the wellbeing indicators from Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) good practice guidance. They contained detailed information on children's interests and areas of significant need. This meant that a consistent approach was used to support children and was having a positive impact on improving their outcomes.

Three visiting professionals told us they were involved with the service. They provided regular support to children in relation to additional support needs and provided training or support to nursery staff. They told us "Carluke Primary Nursery supports their children well. They have an established routine of home visits to engage the families before their children start nursery helping to build relationships and discuss worries or concerns. I have attended some of the home visits to help with transitions" and another said "When I have worked with keyworkers and children directly, communication strategies and recommendations have been put in place by the nursery staff. Not only the keyworkers I am working with as I am aware that they took the opportunity to share strategies with their colleagues to ensure that the child's communication needs were met by all staff".

This was consistent with our findings. Staged intervention and additional support plans support where needed were in place to support children to achieve. Strategies agreed were used consistently in practice. One parent told us "My children have additional support needs and the care and support they receive is more than we could wish for".

Children were happy, having fun and immersed in a supportive and nurturing community within the nursery and wider school environment. Staff were observed responding in a sensitive way to offer further challenge. For example, a group of children were making playdough and noticed it was too sticky. Staff chatted about how they could fix this. One child said more flour was needed and they carried on with confidence. This supported children to be confident and secure in their relationships with staff and each other.

Staff told us that they had made improvements to the lunchtime routine. We agreed with this. Children were now having lunch in the community room and dining hall. This had proved to be successful and provided children the opportunity to enjoy their meal in smaller groups.

This had helped to create relaxed and supportive mealtimes. Lunch and snack were paced to suit the needs of children and opportunities to build skills in self serving were promoted. Water was available to children at all times and they were encouraged to remain hydrated.

Suitable plans were in place to support the management of medication, accidents and incidents. Medication was stored safely out of the reach of children and parents were aware of the expectations around this. We discussed regular reviews and monitoring of this documentation and the management team understood the importance of this.

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's learning was progressing. They were accessing stimulating learning across curricular areas and reflective planning was at the heart of this. Children were placed at the centre of learning and were encouraged to lead their own learning. For example, parents told us "The children are always busy learning new things" and another told us "There is a huge variety of educational and sensory activities for the children to participate in".

Staff provided a good balance of spontaneous and planned play experiences that promoted choice and the development of skills and independence. The service was proud of the additional events and activities they offered for children. These delivered rich, broad and deep opportunities such as woodland adventures in the local community and a hobbit hut which was carpeted and furnished with soft lights and cushions. Children were using the space with staff to dance, play musical instruments and sing songs.

A parent told us "The nursery environment has a good range of areas that meet the children's various needs throughout the day/week. There are cosy, comfortable areas for them to take some time out and there are identifiable areas with different activities. My child told us about the Froebel area, which we thought was amazing". We observed children who were having fun and confident in the environment. The pace of day matched the needs of children and there was minimal disruption to their play. This fostered high-quality play, learning and development.

Staff extended and widened children's thinking through skilful interactions. For example, a member of staff was reading a story with a group of children about a snow dog. They discussed making and throwing snowballs with family and the nativity play planned for later that week. This was supporting children's interest in literacy and communication. The rich conversation sparked children's imagination and was shared within the group.

Skills in language, literacy and numeracy were being developed through play. Staff told us this was on ongoing focus and they were tracking and supporting children's progress and learning in these areas. There were many opportunities indoors, outdoors and in the wider community for children to engage and learn.

Staff had a robust understanding of child development. They were committed to ongoing professional development. They shared research and further reading as a team to ensure they remained up to date with good practice. For example, some staff were undertaking further studies in child centred play and observation. Practice and theory were being used to support planning experiences.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Layout had been given careful consideration to support children's needs as the service had expanded. Staff worked with children to identify how spaces would best be used. This ensured the message was shared with children that they mattered and there was enough space to support their interests and wellbeing. Parents agreed, telling us "The nursery is lovely and inviting. There is a warm and exciting atmosphere".

The team had created a calm, warm and welcoming environment. It was clean and tidy with plenty of natural light for children to play, learn and relax. A variety of safety measures were helping to keep children safe. For example, a secure entry system, risk assessments and suitable arrangements for maintenance. A few areas were identified to enhance safety such as securing a few loose cables. This was addressed before the inspection concluded.

Policies in place were supporting a well led service, such as outings, child protection, additional support needs and complaints.

Infection prevention and control procedures overall were contributing to keeping children safe, such as the use of aprons during mealtimes and embedded handwashing. Posters displayed supported children to develop their understanding of this. We reminded staff to regularly check the nappy changing station. This would ensure infection control procedures were maintained and staff agreed.

The service had established connections within the local community. A parent support group had been established and was supporting families who in turn were supporting the service. A lending library, walks in the community and other experiences were supporting children to widen their skills and learning within the wider community.

A range of experiences and resources supported play and learning. Staff told us the outdoors was an area for development and we agreed. Areas could be further developed to support rich experiential learning. There were already plans underway to address this.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

Staff used good practice guidance, team meetings, professional development reviews and training opportunities to facilitate discussions. This meant that focus areas for the service were well placed to support improvement for children. A parent told us "Parents are given every opportunity to contribute and make suggestions". This was supporting the service to help meet the aspirations families had for their children.

A parent told us "Anytime I have any questions they are answered straight away. The manager always goes above and beyond to help".

The service improvement plan linked with the needs of the service and was linked to staff professional development. Staff had committed to lead roles which supported well informed change. We could see from minutes of meetings that discussions were rich and reflective to ensure a high-quality provision was offered.

Staff shared the challenges faced since last inspection including staff changes, the introduction of 1140 hours early years provision and the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns. However, clear and effective strategies had been put in place to support and manage change sensitively. The leadership team was strong and had a clear vision to support positive outcomes for children and staff. Their vision was one of high expectations supported with high support, this reflected our findings.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation was used as a tool to monitor and drive high-quality care and support. The service had an up-to-date quality assurance calendar. Focus areas included wellbeing, supporting distressed behaviours, outdoor play and the promotion of literacy and numeracy. These were supporting positive change for families and children and were underpinned by current best practice.

All staff were confident, committed and passionate in their promotion of a shared vision and values. Several families shared individual experiences of the focused support they had received. For example, one parent told us "All staff are kind and friendly. They remember the small details about my child which I appreciate" and another said "The staff always go above and beyond. They make my child feel really comfortable and safe".

A variety of two-way communications were in place and supported the direction of the service moving forward. These included online learning journals, newsletters, parent groups and a regular programme of opportunities to stay and play and get involved. Parents welcomed this and told us "Staff are very welcoming and cheerful, communication is clear and concise" and "Every day I get a hand over from my child's key worker which is great".

The views of children and their families were sought to support developments in the service. For example, through the use of questionnaires and feedback chats. Children's voices were heard and acted on and this was reflected in floor books that captured children's interests, thoughts and suggestions.

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.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were well deployed across all of the day. They communicated well such as when supporting lunch time and transitions children from indoors to outdoors. Staff shifts and breaks were flexible which helped to minimise impact on children. This supported our findings; the service was appropriately staffed and supervision ensured children had quality engagements across the day.

Careful consideration had been given to the skills, knowledge, and expertise of the team. For example, each member of staff had a leadership role that focused on providing extended opportunities. This meant that staff were focused and aligned with children's current interests and needs to support progression.

The management team along with staff had worked hard to ensure new staff were well supported through a detailed induction and mentoring programme. This meant that staff were clear in their understanding of their role and confident in their knowledge about the needs of individual children.

Well-functioning systems were in place that enabled new children, families and staff to be introduced and form positive bonds that were supporting high quality outcomes not only for children but also for their families. Families felt this approach worked well.

Families told us "The staff are like one big family who all work so well together. Each and every staff member goes above and beyond to provide a safe and fun learning environment" and another told us "All the staff seem happy at their work and all appear to get along well". Staff were aligned in their nurturing approach and happy to be at work.

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

Recognising the current challenges that exist with physical distancing between adults and that some children are dropped off by extended family members or childminders, additional communication methods with parents should continue to be built upon and explored. This would ensure that all parents have opportunities to be informed about their child's progress and development, have regular opportunities for a two-way dialogue and feel included in their child's experiences at nursery

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve.' (HSCS 4.8)

This area for improvement was made on 6 June 2018.

Action taken since then

Physical distancing between adults as part of Covid-19 restrictions were no longer in place. Parents were able to enter the playroom at drop off and pick up times. All parents had opportunities to be informed about their child's progress and development. They had regular opportunities for two-way dialogue and felt included in their child's experiences at nursery. This area for improvement was addressed.

Previous area for improvement 2

Following discussions with management and staff, we advised that more robust procedures should be implemented for children who may become symptomatic when in attendance at the service. This would contribute towards maintaining a safe environment for both children and staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 6 June 2018.

Action taken since then

Covid-19 restrictions for children who may become symptomatic when in attendance at the service were no longer in place. The service had robust procedures in place for infection prevention and control. This area for improvement was addressed.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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