St. Joseph's Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Park Lane
Blantyre
Glasgow
G72 9AS

Telephone: 01698 825 121

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 February 2023

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015352

About the service

St. Joseph's Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care to 44 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 St. Joseph's 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 21 February 2023 between 08:35 and 15:30. Feedback was provided on Friday 24 February 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 eight people using the service and eight of their family
- spoke with eight staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Monitoring of medication paperwork needed to be more robust.
- Children's individual needs and interests were at the heart of planning. Both parents and children were included in this approach and as a result it was improving outcomes for individual children.
- Both indoor and outdoor environments provided children with a wide variety of interesting and engaging experiences.
- Staff had used Care Inspectorate good practice guidance to successfully undertake a project with children and families about the importance of keeping children safe.
- Children were happy, content and having fun.
- The staff team were happy in their work. They were reflective practitioners and were striving to continually provide and maintain 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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

A parent told us "Each day staff inform us of any activities our child has enjoyed and who they have played with. I have been invited in to catch up with their key worker to set targets and get feedback on their progress". This was consistent with our findings. All children had a personal plan in place which contained information to help meet their needs. For example, actions to support their interests as well as likes and dislikes. This supported children's care and learning needs to be met.

Staff interactions with children were warm, sensitive, skilled and understanding. It was clear strong bonds were established. Staff were aware of children's personal preferences and individual needs. They were consistent in their approach when supporting children. Parents agreed and told us "I found the settling in process extremely supportive; the staff made every effort to ensure that all of my child's needs were met" and another told us that during settling times "Staff were all very supportive to my child's needs as well as my needs as a parent".

Children's rights were respected. Their thoughts and ideas were viewed as an important part of helping to improve their outcomes. Opportunities were available for children to lead their learning and influence the spaces such as through the creation of their own vision and values and having easy access to resources and materials that supported their play. This meant that children were confident, happy and secure in their attachments.

Additional support plans and staged intervention was in place for individual children where needed and was helping to improve outcomes. Children received individual support to meet their needs and staff told us they worked with external agencies to ensure children were getting the right support from the right person in the right way when they needed it. A parent told us that staff were always "Keeping us updated with our child's learning folder to browse every time. As parents it makes us happy knowing they are happy".

Children experienced an unhurried and calm lunch within the school dining hall. Some opportunities were available to develop skills in self-serving, pouring and cutting throughout the day. Staff told us lunchtime was a developing area and they were continually reflecting to ensure it was used as a rich opportunity for staff and children to chat and socialise with their peers 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 were able to flow between indoors and outdoors throughout the day. They were making choices of where to play and were leaders in their own learning. Engaged in a variety of spontaneous and planned learning experiences such as reading stories, playing board games in small groups without adults and making playdough pancakes. Children were having fun.

Resources were open ended enabling children to use their imagination and creativity. For example, children used material as capes, then as baby bedding and finally as picnic blankets where beads were used in cups as pretend water. This ensured children were accessing high quality play and learning.

Children benefitted from daily access to the wider nursery and school environment. A parent told us and we agreed "Children have use of the bigger primary school facilities such as taking part in things like yoga or dancing in the gym hall, going outdoors to the mud kitchen, trim trail, MUGA pitch and local park". We observed children excited, challenged and active in these experiences.

Opportunities to develop ideas and thinking were enhanced through learning. Planning for learning was responsive and based on children's interests and needs. For example, during play in the large outdoor shed children wanted to paint and they collected resources and brought them outdoors. A parent told us "The garden area is really good and the woodwork shed is amazing for the children" and another said "My child has everything they needs in nursery to explore. Great they get to choose what they want to do to be independent". Another group of children decided they would like to take their snack outside and staff supported them to transport snack outdoors. T his type of learning helped to progress skills in problem solving and curiosity.

The day flowed with minimal disruption to children's play. Staff were active and skilled in supporting children to experience high quality outcomes. Risky play and challenge were welcomed and considered with as much value in learning as support was. Children responded well to this approach and enjoyed mud sliding down a hill, walking through the trim trail obstacle course and building towers higher than their height with blocks. Parents recognised this and said that staff "Really care for the children and provide lots of fun activities and learning opportunities".

How good is our setting? 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.

St. Joseph's Nursery Class was a calm, warm and welcoming environment. It was a tidy, well maintained and organised space that had plenty of natural light for children to play, learn and relax. Parents agreed and told us "The children have a great routine handwashing as soon as they enter the nursery. Hand gel is available for the parents" and another said, "The nursery is always clean and tidy".

As part of the service's long term improvement plan, the staff and children had worked and successfully developed the outdoor environment and experiences. Careful consideration had been given to the spaces, layout and purpose. This offered children exciting, creative, and challenging opportunities in nature. Spaces included a large physical grass area and a woodland area which had a tree swing, hedgehog house and a tepee made from trees and branches. This ensured a strong message was shared with children that they mattered and there was ample space to support their wellbeing.

Suitable infection control procedures were in place such as embedded handwashing before mealtimes and after outdoor play. Posters and information displayed supported children to develop their understanding of this. We discussed and the manager agreed with good practice guidance for storage within a nappy changing area.

Cosy spaces such as a tepee in the outdoor area and cosy corners with soft furnishings indoors were available for children to relax and feel safe. An extensive variety of resources and materials were available for children, which enabled the development of learning and exploration across the curriculum.

Children were protected from harm through a variety of safety measures. For example, a secure entry system and a variety of risk assessments were in place. Parents appreciated this and told us that the "Controlled entry is good, sign in and out system works well".

Staff and children had used Care Inspectorate good practice guidance relating to keeping children safe. As part of this they carried out a project to explore all aspects of keeping safe including at nursery, when outdoors, in the community and at home. This was done in a meaningful way and meant that children were aware of the importance of their own safety.

A range of experiences, resources and provocations that stimulated natural curiosity, learning and creativity were provided. Areas were decorated with photos of children engaging in play experiences and pieces of their artwork were respectfully displayed throughout the environment. This gave children a sense of ownership in the space.

The service had established community links. Children visited local shops and a local park and had made initial links with a local heritage centre. The service intended to extend these links wider within the community as part of their improvement plan for the coming year. We agreed this would provide children opportunities to participate in further recreational and social learning in their community.

How good is our leadership? 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 management and staff team worked skilfully together and were particularly committed to bring about positive outcomes for children through regular self-evaluation. For example, elements of the service 2022/23 improvement plan priorities reflected some of our findings on children leading learning and staff peer assessment. A parent told us "Staff are all lovely and approachable if I have any questions or concerns" and another parent told us "I would always feel confident raising any concerns with any of the staff members". This helped demonstrate a strong and well led service with capacity for and commitment to improvement.

Staff told us they felt they could approach the management team with any concerns. They received regular feedback on their work. For example, individual performance reviews and recent peer assessment reviews were helping to develop and supporting improvement discussions about how best to meet children's needs.

Sharing learning within the team was encouraged such as training on risky and outdoor play and staged intervention. Staff told us they were "On a journey of learning and improvement". Continuing to progress this type of practice would support ongoing high-quality care and learning.

Communication methods such as phone calls, face to face chats and newsletters provided a platform for sharing information that supported meeting children's needs. A parent told us they received "Semi regular updates" and another said, "I would like to see more photographs of my child when they are in the nursery and the things they do".

Following discussion with the manager, we learned that online journals were in the process of being introduced as a strategy to further support communication with parents as had been identified in the service improvement plan.

Parents told us they were "Welcomed into the nursery in the mornings to sign in which gives the opportunity to see the environment and be informed of what the children will be doing that day" and another said, "We have had a parents evening meeting which was great". Relationships and effective communication with families were embedded and were supporting meeting the needs of children.

Quality assurance processes were in place and having a significant positive impact on practice and improving outcomes for children. Whilst overall these were well managed and robust some improvements were needed in relation to the management of medication forms and systems to ensure these were also robust. See area for improvement one.

Areas for improvement

1. The manager should review the process for monitoring administration of medication paperwork to ensure it is effective and consistent with the best practice document: 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services'. This will contribute to children's health and wellbeing.

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

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.

Staff communicated very regularly during daily tasks and responsibilities. Deployment of staff was strong and supported supervision of children. This ensured children's experience across the whole day were positive and they were safe. A parent told us "Our child is happy to go to nursery and tells us about their day. I honestly see the difference nursery has made to building their skills and confidence".

Parents told us "Staff have genuinely tailored specific support to meet the needs of our child and we have really seen progress at home". We agreed and observed that distributed leadership roles such as outdoors, music and movement and woodwork leaders were helping to continually maintain a high-quality service. Staff met regularly to evaluate the quality of the service and any improvements needed. They used best practice guidance to support better outcomes for children.

Staff participated in training that led to improvements in children's experiences. For example, training in woodwork increased staff's knowledge of the importance of holistic development and risky play helping to develop children's skills in real life ways. A parent said they were really happy and they felt their child was "really thriving".

Working well together, staff had created a warm and welcoming environment for children. They were motivated, happy to be at work and committed to their role. Staff shared a common vision and worked hard to achieve high quality care and learning for children. One parent told us "The parent stay and learn sessions are particularly great. More of these would be better our child loves it and it's good for parents to meet too". This demonstrated the trusting relationships had been established and another parent told us "My child is very happy and confident with staff and they have all worked well with them to build a relationship. They are very well cared for at St Joseph's".

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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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