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

St. Patrick's Nursery
Overton Road
Strathaven
ML10 6JW

Telephone: 01357 521 317

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 March 2024

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015365

HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

About the service

St. Patrick's Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care to 62 children aged two to not yet attending primary school. Of those no more than 10 are aged two to under three years old.

Care is provided from the nursery within St. Patrick's Primary School, Strathaven, 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 25 and 26 March 2024 between 08:15 and 16:40. Feedback was provided on 28 March 2024. 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 seven people using the service and 13 families
- Spoke with 10 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with one visiting professional.

Key messages

- A few minor improvements were needed to ensure some infection prevention and control strategies were effective.
- The environment was an ongoing area of development.
- Mealtimes were positive and engaging for children. These times were relaxed and sociable.
- There were minimal interruptions to children's play during the day. This helped to ensure that children experienced high quality play and support across the day.
- All day and all-weather access to outdoors for all children provided positive opportunities for children to learn and play in nature.
- Children were happy, settled and explored all areas well.
- Staff were very nurturing. They had created a warm and welcoming environment for children to feel safe, secure and loved.

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 were happy, having fun and engaged. One child told us they "Liked reading stories and playing in the rain" and another told us they "Liked to have lunch and eat sausages". The ethos of the service was supportive and nurturing. Staff responded sensitively to children's needs and interests. For example, we observed several staff supporting distressed behaviours. The strategies used were appropriate to individual children. This supported children to be confident and secure in their relationships with staff and each other.

Staff had worked to improve mealtimes. A rolling lunch was in place and working well. This helped to create a relaxed and supportive experience. 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, they were encouraged to remain hydrated.

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

Children's rights, successes and achievements were shared and celebrated. Staff were committed to delivering a high standard of care through positive relationships and supporting wellbeing. For example, moments of achievement and children's voices were recorded in personal plans and around the service. This helped to ensure children were respected.

Personal plans were in place and took account of good practice guidance. They contained detailed information on children's interests and areas of significant need. Parents were fully involved in decisions about their child's care and areas of focus. They told us staff were "Supportive and always update and interact with me". This ensured consistent approaches were used to support children and had a positive impact on improving their outcomes.

Staff told us various visiting professionals were involved with the service where additional support needs had been identified. They provided regular support and training for nursery staff. One visiting professional said the service was a "Very welcoming and nurturing environment. I have always found them open to feedback and support in relation to meeting the needs of their learners with a range of additional support needs. In relation to recent work, I have found all staff to be inclusive and willing to work alongside multi agency teams and families".

Staged intervention and additional support plans were in place to support children to achieve. Strategies agreed were used consistently in practice. One parent told us "Our child has developed greatly. They are able to communicate better, understand and display positive values with a friend group and are fully engage".

Suitable plans were in place to support the management of medication, accidents and incidents. Medication was stored safely out of the reach of children.

We discussed the importance of monitoring documentation and the management team understood the importance of this.

1.3 Play and Learning

The nursery, school and local community were used well to provide a wide variety of spontaneous and planned experiences. These promoted choice and the development of skills and independence. Depth and breadth of learning was offered through experiences such as woodland adventures in the local community, links with residents in a sheltered housing complex and baking bread and cakes in a local café.

Staff told us it was important to ensure children were placed at the centre of learning and were encouraged to lead their own learning. Children were accessing exciting and motivating learning across curricular areas. They were involved in planning and reflecting on experiences.

Well considered interactions helped to extend children's thinking, widens skills and consolidates learning. For example, a member of staff was observing young children confidently crawling through a star tunnel. They suggested taking torches into the tunnel to see the stars light up. Others were observed encouraged children to weigh ingredients to make playdough, helped children risk assess the height of wooden block towers and joined in role play with babies to make ice cream. Staff were skilled at offering provocations and ideas to extend learning.

Skills in language, literacy and numeracy were being developed through play. Staff told us this was on ongoing focus as part of the service improvement plan and they tracked and supported children's learning in these areas. The opportunities indoors, outdoors and in the wider community were many. Children were able make real life connections in their play.

High-quality play and learning and minimal interruptions to play ensured the pace of the day matched the needs of children. A parent told us "The support provided by the nursery setting and staff ensure that our child's learning and development are continuing to improve". We observed children who were having fun and confident in the environment.

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

Children knew that they mattered. There was enough space to support their interests and wellbeing and the layout had been carefully considered as part of that. Staff worked with children to identify how spaces would best be used. Lights were dimmed in certain spaces and soft twinkle lights set the atmosphere. Gentle music played softly in the background of the entrance area. The environment had been identified for ongoing focus and we encouraged the service to continue to explore natural materials and loose parts to further enhance provocations for learning.

Risk assessments and a secure entry system were some of the safety measures in place that helped to keep children safe. Staff had created a calm, warm and welcoming environment. It was well organised with plenty of natural light for children to play, learn and relax. A few minor areas were identified to improve safety during clean up after mealtimes. This was addressed before the inspection concluded.

There was a wide variety of policies to support the management of the service. These included leading learning, wellbeing and care, safety, communication and quality. Policies had recently been reviewed and were available at all times for parents to access. Consultation had taken place with children, parents and staff to review the vision and values for the service. Values agreed included the importance of children being secure, working as a team, being kind and safe.

Overall infection prevention and control procedures were contributing to keeping children safe. For example, hand washing was embedded and children were supported to understand the importance of infection prevention. However, we reminded staff to regularly check the nappy changing station and organisation of store cupboards. This would ensure infection control procedures were consistently maintained. Staff agreed and action was taken before the inspection concluded.

The service had several connections within the local community. A parent council was established and was supporting families who in turn were supporting the service. Visits were used as a way of furthering children's knowledge and connections. For example, there had been visits from police, fire safety and a therapy dog. Outings included visits such as local shops and walks, Bookbug sessions at the local library and participation in a zero food waste project. This supported children to widen their skills and learn within the community.

A range of experiences and resources supported play and learning. Staff told us the outdoors was an area for development in the long term and we agreed. A few areas could be further developed to support rich experiential learning.

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 shared the challenges faced since last inspection, including staff changes. 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.

Team meetings, reviews and training opportunities were used to facilitate discussions. This meant that focus areas for the service were well placed to support improvement for children and were aligned with good practice guidance.

The service improvement plan linked with the needs of the service and staff professional development. Staff had committed to lead roles which supported well informed change. Monitoring and reflections were rich and reflective to ensure a high-quality provision was offered.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation was used to monitor and drive high-quality care and support. The service had an up-to-date quality assurance calendar. Focus areas included care plan reviews, questionnaires with families and children's, stay and play sessions, tracking learning and playroom observations. These were supporting positive change for families and children and were underpinned by current best practice.

Staff were positive, committed and promoted the shared vision and values of the service. Parents told us of the support they had received. One parent said the service "Cannot be faulted. Friendly, welcoming, knowledgeable, caring and understanding. The values go through all of the school and nursery".

A variety of two-way communications were in place and supported the direction of the service moving forward. These included parents council, parents evenings, newsletters, online journals and a regular programme of opportunities to stay, play and get involved.

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. This was reflected throughout the service.

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. Breaks were flexible to ensure high quality engagement across the day for children. Staff communicated well when tasks took them away from the room such as supporting children's personal care needs and transitions from indoor to outdoors.

Careful consideration had been given to the skills, knowledge, and expertise of the team. Each staff member had a leadership role that focused on providing extended opportunities such as forest school visits and woodwork. The team had recently participated in peer reflections of their work. This meant that staff were focused and aligned with children's current interests and needs to support progression.

The management team along with staff ensured new staff were well supported through a detailed induction and mentoring programme. Staff were clear in their understanding of their role and confident in their knowledge about the needs of children.

Staff shared their experiences. They told us that teamwork was strong and they were supported. Well-functioning systems were in place that enabled children, families and staff to be introduced and form positive bonds. This supported high quality outcomes and families felt this approach worked well.

Families told us "Any concerns or requests made to the nursery team has always been discussed, understood and actioned. Again we cannot thank the team enough" and another told us staff were "Very caring to the full family and not just the children". Staff were aligned in their nurturing approach and happy to be at work.

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
1.2 Children are safe and protected	6 - Excellent
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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