# Riverbank Primary Nursery Class
# Day Care of Children

Paddock Street
Coatbridge
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Telephone: 01236794894

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
30 November 2023

**Service provided by:**
North Lanarkshire Council

**Service provider number:**
SP2003000237

**Service no:**
CS2003015369

## About the service

Riverbank Primary Nursery Class is registered to provide care to a maximum of 56 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time or a maximum of 54 children aged from three years to those not attending primary school and a maximum of two children aged from two years to under three years at any one time.

Care is provided from the nursery class located within Riverbank Primary School, Coatbridge, North 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 28 and 29 November 2023. Feedback was provided on 30 November 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 eight people using the service and six families
- Spoke with 11 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with one visiting professional

## Key messages

- Children's rights were respected.  Their voice was celebrated and viewed as important to improve their outcomes as well as the outcomes of service.
- Children benefitted from free flow access to the outdoor area.  Opportunities to develop ideas, thinking and imagination were enhanced through this.
- Planned strategies to further improve communication with families should be used to communicate regularly and consistently with all families to discuss all aspects of individual children's play, learning and development.
- The manager and staff team worked well together and were committed to an ongoing focus to bring about positive outcomes for children through regular self-evaluation.
- Staff shared a common vision and worked hard to achieve quality care and learning for children. We encouraged them to continue to focus on staff training and nurturing approaches.

## 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.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Staff were respectful of children's rights and told us they were working to further develop this using a variety of strategies in the longer term. This was helping children feel that their views mattered and gave them a sense of ownership of their day and experiences.

Staff were warm, caring and nurturing. This was supporting positive relationships and children's wellbeing. There was a mixture of experience and knowledge in the staff team. The manager told us about ongoing training that supported quality care for children and we agreed this was supporting positive outcomes. We encouraged the manager to continue to develop and maintain their focus on nurturing approaches.

All children had a personal plan in place that was supporting positive outcomes. These plans took account of GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) wellbeing principles and contained information such as likes, care needs and routines. A parent told us they would like to see "More regular updates on the learning journals" and another said "Learning journal updates are very sparse" while another said, "I like the social and learning aspect for children". We discussed how the service could now make the update and review process more formal and engaging for families. The manager told us they were committed to reflecting on this feedback and would explore this further with families.

Additional support plans were in place for individual children when needed. These were helping children to achieve. Strategies were applied and staff told us how they worked to adapt these to the needs of children.

External professionals were involved in developing plans, monitor progress and creating suitable next steps for children. These included educational psychology, speech and language and early years specialist support services. A visiting professional told us "The nursery staff and management have a good overview of all the children within the nursery environment. During meetings, staff can provide updates and an overview of progress made for individual young people" and also said "Staff appear to have positive relationships with the families in the nursery. During meetings, there is a warm, nurturing approach to the families themselves which is an extension of how the staff interact with the children in their care".

Personal care needs such as nappy changing and toileting were carried out in a sensitive manner. Staff were aware of individual needs and responded accordingly. Children were secure and confident in having staff support them at these times. This supported children's dignity and privacy.

We made an area for improvement at the last inspection relation to management of medication. Systems were now robust and managed in line with good practice guidance. The area for improvement had been addressed. The administration of medication was managed in line with good practice guidance.

There had been positive improvements made to mealtimes since the last inspection. Mealtimes were calm, sociable, relaxed and unhurried. Children had opportunity to pour their own drinks, self-serve some food and they responded positively to this experience.

Staff sat with children and used this time to connect. Children enjoyed their meals and had access to water throughout the day to keep hydrated. This was supporting children's health and wellbeing.

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 led their play and showed lots of interest in imaginative and construction experiences. They moved around to explore spaces with ease and confidence and transported resources enhancing their play. Children were able to free flow between indoors and outdoors throughout the day and in all weathers. Access to a boot room to change into all-weather clothing made outdoor all weather play more accessible for children. This was supporting children's choice and interests.

There was a short period before the transition to lunch when children's play was interrupted by staff. Children were asked to tidy up and prepare for a group time. We reminded the service to ensure these interruptions were minimised where possible to ensure routines and transitions in the day were meeting children's needs and not task driven.

The manager told us there was ongoing work taking place to support planning for quality play and learning. This had been identified as part of the service 2023/24 improvement plan and we were able to see some elements of this in practice. For example, some staff were observed extending children's learning when children were using large wooden blocks, sticky tape and straws to build houses. The staff member extended this by discussing strength, weight and balance. This helped extend children's thinking and consolidated learning.

Other children took part in a circle experience outdoors; they were using tickets to board an imaginary train to reach their campfire site. They discussed tickets, money and time. Children moved to the campfire area and pretended to roast marshmallows and sing songs. A staff member supported by encouraging children to choose a song, demonstrated actions and supported children to join in.

There was a developing balance of spontaneous and planned play experiences that were promoting choice and independence. Experiences on offer in all areas took account of children's interests and curiosities and staff followed and engaged in the experiences.

The service had identified numeracy as areas of focus and management were leading this. A variety of strategies were in place to support development, we agreed this would further develop children's skills.

There was a wide variety of resources and areas for children to explore and experience learning across all curricular areas. This included sensory, creative, large physical and block play with some open-ended materials. We noted that the environment could be further developed to build more challenge and creativity into children's experiences. This was also identified by the team during recent reflections. Plans were underway to make meaningful updates to the environment that would enhance areas for children.

Areas within the playroom were in the early stages of development. The staff team had worked hard to consider children's needs and interests as part of the layout of the room. We encouraged the team to continue being reflective and to keep introducing provocations and more open-ended resources to bring richness, depth and breadth of learning for children.

Links with the school were strong and the management team told us of the long-term plans to support children and families through the transition process. The vision for the service was to be a hub within the community and plans such as a parent's group were already in the early stages of development.

## How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

**2.2 Children experience high quality facilities**

Riverbank Primary Nursery Class was opened as part of a new community hub building in August 2023. Riverbank Primary School was formed as a result of the amalgamation of Sikeside Primary School and Nursery Class and Carnbroe Primary School. As a new service, considerable consideration had been given to layout and use of rooms to support children and their families. There was a boot room with the provision of weatherproof clothing, a large nature inspired outdoor area and other spaces available within the school for shared use.

The nature inspired outdoor area provided lots of opportunities to develop learning through senses and supported the strengthening of connections in the brain. The space was well organised with many different zones offering various types of play opportunities. For example, a mud kitchen, storytelling area, water zones, large scale sand pit and obstacle courses.

Parents welcomed the variety of learning and the environment. A parent told us "The new nursery setting is spacious and seems so to flow well from each area. The outdoor area is fabulous for the children to play and learn in" and another said there was "An excellent choice of toys for children & outdoor play".

Spaces available had been well considered and were developmentally appropriate. Some children's interests were reflected within the environment such as interests in caring for baby dolls and exploration with cars and transport. Children used spaces well and transported materials around the indoors and outdoors developing their play further. Children as a result were engaged, laughing, playing together and content.

There was a variety of policies and procedures in place and available to families. For example, data protection, parental partnerships, child protection, code of conduct and complaints. These policies were recently reviewed and supported a well-managed service.

Staff told us about the benefit to children's experiences since moving to the new building and the purchase of additional resources. Management said a focus on building and further enhancing open ended and natural resources was part of the long-term plan. We agreed that further development of resources would enable children to experience richness, depth and curiosity in their imaginative play.

We made an area for improvement at the last inspection in relation to safety and security at the service. Systems in the new building were robust. The environment was secure and staff continually reflected to keep children safe. For example, a secure keypad and buzzer entry system and underfloor heating were in place. The area for improvement had been addressed.

Overall infection prevention and control practices were minimising the spread of infection. For example, staff used gloves and aprons for nappy changing and handwashing was embedded. We highlighted the importance of maintaining organised and clean storage spaces out with the playroom. Actions taken before the inspection concluded were contributing to keeping children safe.

## How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

**3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led**

Overall staff felt valued and motivated to provide quality care for children and families. Since the last inspection discussions and reflections had provided an opportunity to realign expectations for all relating to communication and teamwork. We agreed that management should continue to support clear communication which would further support staff's knowledge and confidence with current best practice and expectations within their roles.

Monitoring processes had been introduced and were contributed to improvements for children and their families. These included audits of planning, observations and regular staff meetings. We encouraged the management team to continue forward with this robust approach to secure meaningful long-term improvements.

A variety of communication methods were used to keep parents informed and gather their ideas and thoughts. These included newsletters, the use of an online app, recently introduced stay and play sessions and chats during drop off and pick up. The manager told us through team reflections they had identified parental partnerships as an area they want to further improve and develop. We agreed this would help to maintain positive and trusting relationships.

Staff professional review meetings were reflective of the achievements and challenges faced in the past year. Staff told us they found these supportive and helped them with professional reflection. The service should continue to support staff in this way this to ensure there is a focus on providing constructive feedback. This would aid the development of staff practice and enhance the quality of children's care.

The staff team were resilient and had worked hard over the last year to close one nursery, move to a new building and move forward as part of an amalgamated service. As part of this process staff had undertaken a variety of training such as nurture, self-evaluation and teamwork. Staff were keen to learn new things that would develop their practice and enhance children's experiences . Continuing to take this area forward in such a positive way would enable staff to gather more knowledge about how best to meet the needs of all children.

Regular staff meetings were supporting the development of the service. All staff felt included and were able to share their thoughts and suggestions for improving children's outcomes. These meetings keep the needs and interests of children central and were well supported by management.

## How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

**4.3 Staff deployment**

Staff had created a caring and trusting environment for children and families. Children were well supervised by staff who communicated clearly during times such as drop off and collection and when children moved between the nursery and school.

The service was appropriately staffed to provide care to children. There were a few staff absences during the inspection, however staff were deployed in a way that ensured a distribution of skills and knowledge. They communicated regularly about children's individual needs and when a task took them away from their role such as supporting children's toileting and when moving between indoors and outdoors.

There were a few missed opportunities to further enhance positive experiences across the day for all children. We discussed this with the manager and they agreed. The management team had already considered the skills, knowledge and expertise of the staff team as part of the improvement plans for the service. Continuing to develop this would help ensure children have positive experiences across the day.

Changes within the staff team meant that children had experienced changes to people who cared for them. We acknowledged that this reflected the current staffing crisis within the social care sector of retaining and recruiting staff. However, staff had been working hard to build on relationships with each other and kept children at the centre of their approach. They recognised they now needed time to move forward as a team working in partnership.

Staff who had most recently joined the service knew their role and understood children's individual care needs. New staff spoke positively about the induction process which they said was "Welcoming and informative". The service was using good practice guidance to further enhance staff inductions.

Management and staff told us the service had faced challenging circumstances in the last year. However, we noted that the staff team were resilient, friendly and happy to be at work. They were committed to improving outcomes for all children. This was helping to create a positive environment for children and their families.

People caring for children were safely recruited and registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. They are the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. They provide public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice and supporting the professional development of those registered with them.

## 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**

To ensure that medication is administered safely to children, the manager should make sure that medication records contain the necessary information to meet children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'my care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective'. (HSCS 1.24)

**This area for improvement was made on 20 January 2023.**

**Action taken since then**

Systems to support the management of medication were robust. Medication records contained the necessary information to meet children's needs. This area for improvement was addressed.

**Previous area for improvement 2**

To ensure that children are supported to progress their play and learning, the provider and manager should make sure that children can freely access a wide range of toys and materials that stimulate them and meet their developmental needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'as a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play including, using open ended and natural materials'. (HSCS 1.31) And 'as a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity. (HSCS 2.27)

**This area for improvement was made on 20 January 2023.**

**Action taken since then**

Children were able to freely access a wide range of toys and materials that stimulated them and met their developmental needs. This was supporting children to progress their play and learning. This area of improvement was addressed.

### Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure that children are safe from harm, the provider and manager should make sure that the environment is safe.

This should include but is not limited to, securing the entry of the premises and reducing the risk from hot radiators. This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 'my environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 20 January 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Robust systems were in place to ensure that children were safe from harm and the environment was safe. For example, the premises were secure and heating was provided through an underfloor heating system. This area for improvement was addressed.

### Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure that children have a positive experience throughout their nursery day, the manager should make sure that staff are deployed in a way that ensures distribution of skills and knowledge.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 'my care and support is consistent and stable because people work well together'. (HSCS 3.19)

**This area for improvement was made on 20 January 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Staff were deployed in a way that ensured a distribution of skills and knowledge. This was supporting children to have positive experiences throughout their nursery day. 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? | 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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