St. David's Primary Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

1 Annieshill View
Plains
Airdrie
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015377

About the service

St. David's Primary Nursery Class is registered to provide care to a maximum of 48 children aged 3 years to not yet attending primary school full time at any one time. Care is provided from two adjoining playrooms in a self-contained wing in the primary school, which is located in Plains in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire. The service is situated close to shops, parks and other amenities.

The primary school and nursery are both managed by the headteacher, who oversees the management, supervision and day to day running of the service.

The service is provided by North Lanarkshire Council.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place between 23 and 26 January 2023. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included, previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with the children using the service and received feedback from four of their family members.

- Spoke with staff and the manager.
- Spoke with a visiting professional.
- Observed practice.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from secure, nurturing relationships with staff. Staff and families worked closely together to plan children's care.
- Children were well supported to lead their play and learning, and had access to a wide variety of play opportunities.
- Staff worked very well together and were skilled practitioners.
- Staff and management worked with a wide variety of external professionals to support children's development.
- Staff were deployed in such a way that supported continuity of care and effective supervision of children.
- Children would benefit from a more nurturing lunch time experience.
- Robust quality assurance systems would support the service with their improvement journey.

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled and secure in the setting and were confident in their interactions with staff and each other. Staff supported children to care for their environment and play resources. Children were treated with respect, listened to and had opportunities to make decisions about their nursery. It was clear staff valued them as individuals. Children who required additional support were very well supported in the setting.

Staff were kind, calm, and had a gentle manner which supported children to feel safe and secure. Staff interactions were caring, warm and responsive to children's needs. Children had developed strong bonds with staff and often sought them out for reassurance and affection throughout the day. This helped create a caring, nurturing environment where children felt safe, secure and loved.

Each child had a key worker who was responsible for their care and wellbeing. This consistent, caring relationship, helped children to settle and feel safe in the setting. All staff in the playroom knew children very well and were involved in planning for their care and development.

Key Workers shared how they gathered information about children's needs, and how this supported them to plan for children as individuals. From the personal plans and learning journals we viewed, these demonstrated staff had gathered important information about children's health and wellbeing and development needs.

Where children required additional support, their plans detailed the clear strategies in place to support them. When telling us about their journal, a child commented, "the ladies send mummies and daddies the story of what we've been doing at nursery." A parent/carer told us "I really enjoy reading my daughter's online learning journal, which the staff update regularly. Looking at pictures and reading about her experiences gives me a better insight into her day and allows us to chat about her learning at home. It is also nice to share some of her home experiences with the nursery."

We encouraged the service to continue to develop personal plans to ensure these more clearly demonstrate how children's needs are to be met, their progress and achievements.

Effective methods were used to ensure parents/carers were involved in planning for their child. For example, staff created meaningful opportunities for parents/carers to engage in conversations when they arrived and departed the service. A parent/carer commented "the nursery staff have always worked in close partnership with us and take on board any strategies we have used at home to support our child, allowing consistency between home and nursery."

Staff worked very effectively with external agencies to support children's development and identify next steps in their learning. A visiting professional spoke positively about the partnership working, and very highly of staff's commitment to ensuring children received the personalised support they required.

Snack time was a very positive experience. This was enjoyable and unhurried, where children's independence was well promoted. Thoughtful touches, for example vases of flowers, real crockery, menu displays and visual cues of the routine, made this a very pleasant, sociable experience. Children told us, "I like to sit with my friends," "I love bananas," and "I'm good at washing my plate." A healthy shopper initiative was a meaningful way to involve children in making decisions about snack and involving their wider family.

We found there was scope for lunch time to be a more positive experience. Food choices were nutritious and reflected current guidance. Children mostly enjoyed their lunch and special dietary and cultural needs were well catered for. Water was available throughout the day to ensure children remained hydrated. However, this was a more task focused experience and did not reflect the positive, nurturing routine that children experienced at snack time. Opportunities to promote children's independence, choice, and social skills were very limited during this time. Staff and management had recognised this. We recommended that the provider, management team and staff continue to improve mealtime experiences for children, (see area for improvement 1.)

Children were safe and protected from harm, with clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Staff understood the role they played, and all staff had undertaken annual refresher child protection training. The manager was the child protection coordinator. They understood their responsibilities and the systems that were in place to report any concerns. We were confident any child protection matters would be responded to appropriately.

Medication was generally well managed in the service. It was stored appropriately and was easily accessible. Boxes were clearly labelled with children's names. Staff were clear about children's health needs and how this should be managed. The manager agreed to take forward our suggestions, which would further improve medication systems. This included, ensuring clear protocols are in place for children who have significant health needs.

1.3 Play and learning

Children benefitted from planning approaches that were child centred and responsive to their interests and experiences. Some played happily together with their friends, while others were content playing on their own or alongside others. Children had opportunities to engage in child-initiated activities both indoors and out. There was a sense of fun and excitement, and children were highly engaged in their play for extended periods of time.

A parent/carer commented "The experiences on offer provide my child with challenge in her learning and keeps her engaged and motivated."

The stimulating learning environment and interesting activities ensured children had opportunities to be creative and curious during play. Children's literacy and numeracy skills were being supported through opportunities to lead their own play and through a balance of well planned and spontaneous play experiences. This was further supported by a wide range of learning programmes, which were skilfully delivered by staff.

Staff understood the importance of outdoor play to children's health, wellbeing and development. Children could access the outdoor space independently in all weathers. We observed children having fun playing in the rain, using the wide range of resources and being imaginative in their play. We saw some children engaging in more risky and challenging play on the climbing frame. This supported them to build self-esteem and confidence, and supported them to express their imagination and problem solve.

Children benefitted from accessing their local and wider community for play and learning opportunities, for example trips to the allotment, shops, local parks and themed outings. This enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the wider community environment and their overall wellbeing.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should review and improve the quality of lunch time experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

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 any areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The service is provided from a self-contained area within St. David's Primary School. A secure entry system was in place and was well managed by staff.

The setting was comfortable and furnished to a high standard. Homely touches, such as displays, photographs, soft furnishings and furniture successfully created a welcoming, inviting environment for children and their families. The playroom was decorated in neutral colours which helped create a calm, nurturing space for children. Large windows provided the playroom with plenty of natural light. Children had a sense of ownership within the setting and were involved in making changes. Staff supported children to care for their environment and play resources.

Play areas had been very well considered and took account of children's interests and development, with consideration given to children being able to access toys and resources independently. Children had access to a wide range of high quality resources, including loose parts resources to support children's imagination and creativity.

Areas were spacious, providing children with opportunities to play on their own and in small or larger groups with ample space to extend their activities. Cosy spaces provided quiet, calm area for children who wished to spend some time alone or those who wished to relax and rest.

Cloakrooms, most toilets and the changing area were accessible from the playroom. Each child had access to their own space to store their belongings providing a sense of ownership.

Staff ensured children were always accounted for, and effective systems were in place to monitor this.

Children had direct access to a spacious outdoor area from the playroom. This was an interesting space with different surfaces for children to practice key skills. Children were involved in risk assessing their play environment and were developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

A child commented "look at me, I can climb to the top of that."

Staff and management discussed plans to further develop the outdoor area and have agreed to give further consideration to additional safety measures, including security arrangements.

We were satisfied the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and staff. Rooms were well ventilated and toys and furniture were clean. Good hand hygiene practices were carried out by staff and children, and children were supported to do this well. Children benefitted from returning to a refreshed playroom after lunch.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with parents/carers. We suggested that auditing these may prevent further accidents/incidents occurring, and would contribute to keeping children safe.

We highlighted some areas for improvement in the setting. The manager took immediate action, and most areas were addressed before the inspection ended. It was agreed that further consideration would be given to improving children's changing facilities.

A parent/carer commented, "The nursery environment is clean, well maintained and I feel it is safe and secure. My daughter enjoys playing outdoors and when she helps prepare the snack with staff." Another parent/carer commented, "I feel that since Covid restrictions were lifted the nursery staff have worked hard at including parents in our children's nursery experience which has been great e.g. Play on Pedals workshop, Stay and Play, Book Bug, PEEP, Christmas Outing, Lending Library, Graduation, Fundraising walks."

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 any areas for improvement.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The service had undergone some leadership changes since the last inspection. A new management team had been appointed. The manager was visible in the setting and had a clear vision for the service, which holds children and their families at the heart of their work. They discussed plans to review the current aims and vision and recognised the importance of including staff and families in this process.

The manager had a positive attitude to change and demonstrated very positive leadership. They clearly valued staff and were committed to ensuring they were motivated and supported to carry out their role effectively.

The manager had a good understanding of the service's strengths and the improvements that were still needed to improve the overall quality of the service. Some quality assurance processes were in place that were impacting positively on outcomes for children and families. This included the service's development plan which reflected some key areas for improvement. The local authority quality officer visited the service regularly, and worked with management and staff to support them on their improvement journey.

The manager identified that there was scope for quality assurance processes to be more robust and agreed to develop effective systems to monitor all aspects of the service. We recognised the capacity for continuous improvement within the management and staff team, (see area for improvement 1.)

Staff worked very well together. Regular meetings provided them with opportunities to receive updates on the service, discuss individual children and share ideas on what was working well in the playrooms and what could be improved. Staff were empowered to make changes and were proactive in taking these forward.

The service used some effective methods to communicate with parents/carers. This kept them up to date and helped them be involved in the life of the service. For example, daily chats, electronic learning journals, one to one meetings, regular newsletters and social media were used well to share and gather information.

Parents/carers had some meaningful opportunities to share their suggestions on how the service could be improved, which was welcomed by management and staff. For example, their views were sought about learning and parent programmes, and their suggestions helped staff make improvements. The manager identified, and we agreed that there was scope to further develop ways to involve children and parents/carers in developing the service.

A parent/carer told us 'I am very happy with the service and believe the staff at St David's have my daughter's best interests at heart and provide her with lots of learning opportunities. I feel confident when dropping my child off that she will be well looked after and cared for.'

There was a commitment to using staff's strengths, interests and skills to lead on specific areas of practice. All staff members had undertaken champion roles within the setting, which enabled them to develop leadership skills and strengthen their knowledge of best practice guidance. The service should continue to embed this approach and support staff to share their learning with each other.

The manager was in the process of developing a more meaningful induction and professional review and development programme to support staff to develop in their role. They were committed to using meaningful and supportive ways to develop staff individually and as a team.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children receive high quality care and support, the manager should strengthen the service's quality assurance processes using best practice guidance. Children and their families should continue to be involved in this process.

This should include, but not be limited to:

• effective monitoring of all aspects of the service, including medication and accident/incident records, personal plans and staff professional body registrations.

• submit all relevant notifications to the Care Inspectorate.

• complete and submit an annual return for the service, when requested to do so.

This is to ensure the quality of care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS: 4.23).

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 key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were enthusiastic about their role and spoke very positively about their work. They worked extremely well together to create a positive, welcoming environment for children and their families.

Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with the children. They understood that continuity of care was important for children. Staff were respectful and affectionate towards the children. They respected children's rights and it was clear that they valued them, and wanted the very best for them and their families.

Staffing levels were carefully planned to ensure there were sufficient staff to consistently meet children's needs. Staff worked very effectively to ensure children were well supervised throughout the day and to ensure there was minimal disruption to their play. They were responsive and sensitive to each child's needs and ensured that high levels of engagement were consistently maintained.

Staff communicated very well with each other and they were flexible in their approach. There were a good balance of skills and experience across the team, with more recent staff being supported well in their role.

Staff had engaged in a variety of training and professional reading to develop their knowledge and skills including, local authority mandatory training, Planning in the Moment, Do Be Mindful, Hope for Autism and a wide range of play and learning programmes to support children and parents/carers. The management team were visible in the setting, and played a key role in supporting good practice.

Staff were committed to developing their professional knowledge and skills. Programmes, such as Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) and Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), were being used to reflect on, and strengthen practice. This was impacting positively on children's and families experiences.

A parent/carer comment: "The staff couldn't be more helpful and my son absolutely adores his key worker and the other teachers and always has lovely things to say about them. I can honestly say we are delighted with his nursery and knowing he's safe, well and happy whilst being in their care makes me as a mum feel so content."

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

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