Our Lady & St Francis Primary Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Newarthill Road
Carfin
Motherwell
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Telephone: 01698 274 947

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 March 2023

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015389

HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

About the service

Our Lady & St Francis Primary Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 50 children aged from 2 years to those not yet attending primary school of whom no more than 20 are under 3 years of age. Care is provided from two adjoining playrooms in a self-contained wing in the primary school, which is located in Carfin, Motherwell, 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. There are two Principal Leads who also form part of the management team.

The service is provided by North Lanarkshire Council.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 2 March and 7 March 2023. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with many of the children attending the service and eight of their friends and family members.
- Spoke with staff and the management team.
- Spoke with two visiting professionals.
- Observed practice.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They knew the children very well and ensured their individual needs were met.
- Children were well supported to lead their play and learning and had access to a wide variety of exciting play experiences.
- Staff worked closely with parents/carers and visiting professionals, to ensure that children's learning and development needs were being well supported.
- Children benefitted from being cared for in a high quality setting, which was furnished to a high standard.
- Nursery routines and staff deployment should continue to be monitored and adapted to ensure quality experiences.
- Continued development of 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?	5 - Very 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 any areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support.

Children were happy, settled and confident in the setting. They confidently entered their nursery, happily separating from their parents/carers. Staff's kind and gentle manner helped them to feel safe and secure. Interactions between staff and children were warm, calm and caring. Children sought and received reassurance and affection throughout the day. This helped create a caring, nurturing environment where children felt special and loved.

Children told us they liked their nursery and particularly enjoyed spending time outdoors. They had fun playing with their friends and with staff. Some had developed special friendships with each other.

Staff treated children respectfully and valued them as individuals. They engaged with children at their level when supporting and interacting with them.

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 and secure in the setting. All staff knew children very well and were involved in planning for their care and development. A parent/carer commented, "it's the same lovely staff members all the time, which allows both parents and children to build positive relationships with the staff." Children's 'wee books' contained important information about how their development needs were being supported, with their progress and achievements recognised and celebrated. A parent/carer told us, "learning plans which details my child's monthly outcomes she has been learning is very personal to her."

Children who required additional support were well supported to achieve. Plans contained clear details of the support required and supportive strategies were implemented mostly consistently throughout the day. We suggested the use of visual supports could be further developed to support children to communicate their needs and wishes and help their understanding of routines.

Staff worked very effectively with a range of agencies to support children's development and identify next steps in their learning. Visiting professionals spoke very positively about partnership working and very highly of staff's commitment to ensuring children received the support they required. They commented, "There is something special about Our Lady & St Francis Nursery" and another told us "It's a pleasure working with the nursery."

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. Staff planned a wide range of fun activities for 'Family Fridays,' where parents/carers attend the service and observe their child at play. This helped to develop and maintain good relationships and work in partnership with parents/carers. Parents/carers spoke very highly about how the service communicates with them.

Snack time was a positive experience. This was enjoyable and unhurried, where children's independence

was well promoted. Thoughtful touches, for example vases of flowers on the tables, made this a very pleasant, sociable experience. A parent/carer commented, "Staff regularly take my child on outings to pick snack, allowing her opportunities to walk in her community and gives her the choice of snack that day, she comes home and can talk about this experience with family."

Significant changes to routines, including lunchtimes had very recently been introduced. Food choices were nutritious and reflected current guidance. Special dietary and cultural needs were well catered for. Water was available throughout the day, ensuring children were kept hydrated.

Staff and management took prompt action to make some positive adjustments to routines during our visit. However, we acknowledged that time was needed to monitor and adapt routines, to ensure that children's experiences are positive, nurturing and support the development of key skills. Staff and management were highly motivated and committed to ensuring changes resulted in children experiencing high quality mealtimes and responsive routines.

Children were safe and protected from harm, with clear protection 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 and had recently attended enhanced training on this topic. Plans were in place for the other leaders to attend this also. Management and staff 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 staff using planning approaches that were child centred and responsive to their interests and experiences. Many 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, which were well facilitated by staff. There was a sense of fun and excitement and children were engaged in their play for extended periods of time.

The stimulating learning environment and interesting activities provided children with opportunities to be creative and curious during play. Children's literacy and numeracy skills were being developed through opportunities to lead their own play and positive staff interactions. This was further supported by a wide variety of high quality play resources and a range of learning programmes. For example, children engaging in water play were using containers to fill, pour and measure liquids.

Staff understood the importance of outdoor play to children's health, wellbeing and development. Children benefitted from accessing the outdoor space throughout the day and in all weathers. We observed children having fun and being imaginative in their play. For example, children playing in the mud kitchen used a range of materials to 'make their dinner.' Children's interests were supported well by staff. We observed children being interested in bugs and staff using this opportunity to discuss and learn more about them.

The stimulating outdoor space enabled children to engage in more risky, challenging play. Children confidently used garden structures to climb, balance, problem solve and persevere. Challenging play, for example using tree swings, provided opportunities for children to experience a range of emotions, including excitement, sense of danger, trust and achievement. This contributed positively to children developing confidence, resilience and positive self esteem.

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 key question as very good.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

The service is provided from a self-contained area within Our Lady & St Francis Primary School. A secure entry system was in place which was well managed by staff. Management and staff had recently taken positive steps to further secure the outdoor area, to ensure children were safe and secure. The setting was comfortable and furnished to a very high standard. Homely touches, such as displays, photographs, soft furnishings and unique furniture helped create 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.

At the time of our visit, the service had opened up the individual playrooms to create one large space for the children. While this was a recent change, it was already impacting positively on the quality of children's experiences. This included, providing more space for children to experience an extended range of activities and develop relationships with wider groups of children.

Playrooms were spacious and well planned to provide children with opportunities to play on their own and in small or larger groups. Spaces were used flexibly, providing opportunities for children to extend their activities. Cosy spaces provided quiet, calm areas for children who wished to spend some time alone or those who wished to relax and rest. Quiet areas ensured children had a safe space to self-regulate their emotions, which supports emotional wellbeing.

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 materials that supported the development of imagination, investigation and creativity skills. Cloakrooms, toilets and 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, stimulating outdoor area from the playroom which was available throughout the day. This was an interesting, exciting space with different surfaces for children to develop important skills. Children were involved in risk assessing their play environment and were developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

The service planned to reintroduce a forest schools programme. We agreed this would enrich children's outdoor experiences and help develop more positive links within the community.

Effective 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.

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 led well.

The service's values and aims set out a clear vision for the setting, with children's wellbeing and right to play at the heart of their work. This had recently been revised with staff, families, and children and reflected meaningful aspirations for the service.

The management team demonstrated very effective leadership. They had a very positive attitude to change and placed great importance on including others in achieving their vision. They had a good understanding of the service's strengths and the improvements that were still needed to improve the overall quality of the service. Management and staff had worked extremely hard to improve all aspects of the nursery, including addressing all recommendations made at the last inspection.

Management valued staff and were commitment to ensuring they were motivated and well supported to carry out their role. This resulted in staff feeling fully supported in their work and motivated to provide a high quality service. Staff were committed to taking on leadership roles. They spoke confidently about the positive impact professional development opportunities had on them as practitioners and the wider experiences for staff and children. Management were currently considering how this approach could be strengthened to ensure that staff's strengths, interests and skills are meaningfully utilised. This will continue to develop staff's leadership skills and support positive outcomes for children and their families.

The service had developed some very effective systems to support continuous improvement. Self-evaluation approaches had been improved, which enabled management and staff to reflect on their good practice and identify where improvements could be made. This approach was having a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children and their families. We suggested ways in which quality assurance processes could be further improved to ensure all aspects of the service are robustly monitored.

Parents/carers had meaningful opportunities to share their suggestions on how the service could be improved, which was welcomed by management and staff. This ensured they were included and could influence change. A parent/carer told us about how the management team responded promptly to their suggestion to improve communication using social media.

Children's suggestions were captured within self-evaluation activities, ensuring their views and ideas were respected. We agreed with the service's plan to strengthen children's voice across all aspects of the service.

A parent/carer commented, "I'm happy and feel comfortable and content leaving my daughter in the hands of Our Lady and St. Francis nursery knowing she will be safe and happy."

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 any areas for improvement.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were very enthusiastic about their role and spoke positively about their work. They were respectful and supportive of one another, and had worked hard to create a warm, welcoming environment for children and their families. A parent/carer commented, "It's a lovely, friendly nursery and all staff always have the biggest smiles on their faces each day."

Staff's kind, caring and nurturing interactions supported children to feel safe and secure. They were respectful and affectionate towards the children and ensured children's rights were well promoted. Staff valued children and wanted the very best for them and their families. A parent/carer told us, "The staff are all fantastic and have taken the time to get to know my child and identify his needs and wants."

Staff were deployed in such a way that ensured children were supervised and their needs met throughout the day. They were responsive and sensitive to children's needs and worked hard to ensure that quality engagement was consistently maintained. Staff understood that continuity of care was important for children and communicated well with each other when a task took them away from their responsibilities. This resulted in children consistently receiving care from staff who knew them well. Management and staff have agreed to continue to ensure a flexible approach at key times, for example lunchtimes. This will ensure children's learning and development is consistently well supported.

Clear processes for mentoring and supporting new, less experienced staff were in place. Management and more experienced staff actively supported them to develop their skills, knowledge and expertise.

There was a good balance of skills and experience across the team. Staff were committed to their professional development and had engaged in a wide variety of training and professional reading to develop their knowledge and skills. They had regular opportunities to meet both as a team, which provided opportunities to discuss individual children and ensured they were kept up-to-date with local and national best practice guidance, self evaluation and practice issues.

The management team were consistently visible in the setting and played a key role in supporting good practice. Staff told us they were very well supported by their manager and colleagues and felt their views and opinions mattered.

A parent/carer commented, "I cannot thank the staff enough for how much they have done for my child and the support they have provided not only for him, but myself as well."

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

Staff should ensure older children experience stability in their care and support by providing a nurturing approach to meet their individual needs.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I experience warmth, kindness and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting and caring for me." "I can understand the people who support and care for me when they communicate with me."

Health and Social Care Standards 3.9 and 3.12 Consideration should be given to: supporting children's communication and understanding; and providing reassurance and physical comfort.

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2019.

Action taken since then

Children were shown kindness and compassion. Staff were responsive to their needs, providing comfort and reassurance throughout the day. Strategies had been identified and were being used to support individual children to communicate changes to routines. We suggested ways in which this approach could be strengthened but were satisfied with the action taken by the service.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Management and staff should further develop children's written personal plans and profiles. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "My personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices."

Health and Social Care Standards 1.15

Consideration should be given to:

Personal plan being in place within 28 days;
Consistent content of paperwork within plans and profiles;
Recording information relating to children's specific health needs. Consideration should be given to personal risk assessments where relevant;
Staff to develop a more evaluative writing style, placing greater emphasis on children's significant learning and identifying and revisiting meaningful observations and next steps; and Reviewed at least once every six months, more often if there are any significant changes.

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2019.

Action taken since then

The service had taken positive steps to address this recommendation. All children had their own 'wee book' which demonstrated how their health, wellbeing and development needs were being met, progress and achievements.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To further improve staff's practice and support better outcomes for children it would be beneficial for them to revisit training they have participated in and attend further training. This training should reflect improvements as detailed under Quality of Care and Support and Environment.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states that "I have confidence in people because they are
trained, competent and skilled, and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes".
Health and Social Care Standards 3.14

Consideration should be given to:

Solihull;
Trauma;
Building the Ambition; and
Autism.

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2019.

Action taken since then

Staff had undertaken a wide range of training since the last inspection. This was impacting positively on their development and outcomes for children and families.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To further support positive outcomes for children and the continuous improvement of the service management and staff must develop and implement rigorous and robust, quality assurance systems.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states that I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.

Health and Social Care Standards 3.14

Consideration should be given to:
robust and rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring across the quality of care and support, environment, staffing, leadership and management.

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2019.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance systems had been further developed and clearly showed the service's improvement journey and where further improvements were needed.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

The service should ensure that views requested from families and other stakeholders meaningfully support the ongoing development of the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social
Care Standards which states that "I can be meaningfully involved in how the organisations that support and care for me work and develop."

Health and Social Care Standards 4.6

Consideration should be given to:

audited responses to families, children and other stakeholders timeously

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2019.

Action taken since then

Management and staff had taken positive steps to improve how feedback is gathered from families. These were audited and responded to promptly.

This area for improvement had been 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?	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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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