Creetown Nursery
Day Care of Children

Creetown Primary School
Chain Road
Creetown
Newton Stewart
DG8 7JR

Telephone: 01671 820 243

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 October 2023

Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003015478

About the service

Creetown Nursery is a daycare for children service which operates from classrooms within Creetown Primary School.

The provider is Dumfries and Galloway Council. The service is currently registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children per session of whom no more than five may be aged 2-3 years.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between Tuesday, 3 October and Wednesday, 4 October 2023 between 08:45 and 15:00 hours. 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 seven children using the service and two of their family.
- Spoke with six staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

We shared electronic questionnaires with the service to issue to parents. We received seven responses which we refer to within this report.

Key messages

- Staff were kind, caring, nurturing and fun.
- The staff team was well led by a competent and passionate manager.
- Children enjoyed playing in well-resourced rooms and inviting outdoor area.
- The service was working well towards improving communication between nursery and home.
- Personal plans would benefit from further development to reflect staff knowledge of children.
- We asked for some improvements to be made to the environment.

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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, where strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were mostly very happy, settled and confident. Staff responded well to children, using nurturing approaches, recognising when children needed additional support and help. This helped children feel secure in their care.

Staff had developed strong relationships with children, confidently describing their needs and interests. Personal plans were in place and staff were beginning to develop the electronic records which complemented the information gathered from parents. We found that, although staff knew children well, there were some gaps in how this was recorded. However, personal plans should continue to be developed to ensure next steps and strategies for each individual child are clear and meaningful. (See area for improvement 1 below.)

We observed both snack and lunch service. The unhurried and relaxed meals meant that children enjoyed nutritious and sociable times, together with staff sitting with them, supporting them well. We carried out a S.O.F.I. observation (Short, Observational, Framework for Inspection) which confirmed that the engagement of staff at this key time, was well managed. Helpers were chosen to assist with meal set ups; however, further self-service opportunities for every child would promote and extend independence and skills. Although some children were kept hydrated, using their own bottles, staff should promote this further, ensuring all children have easy access to water during the day.

Staff were competent in their roles and responsibilities relating to protecting children from harm. They understood the procedures to take should they have a concern about a child. There were effective arrangements for designated child protection officers and annual refresher training was attended by the whole staff team.

The service had some links to external agencies, such as speech and language. They were able to share leaflets about the services available in the community with parents which meant that children's well-being was being supported. Staff were supportive of strategies to support children with communication; however, keeping clear records of this work would further improve this key work.

Medication administration arrangements were effective. For example, parents had worked in partnership with staff to ensure that safe guidance supported individual children and their healthcare needs. Medications were stored safely while still easily available when required. Staff were suitably trained in first aid, meaning children were safely cared for should any incidents or accidents occur.

Staff supported children to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, helping to keep them safe from infections. Well-being was a key feature of the nursery, with a focus on 'Well-being Wednesday' which staff used to ensure they offered a caring and loving environment for children. Parents told us: "The staff are so kind and work great with my child."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were provided with good quality play experiences which impacted positively on their well-being. They were well supported to explore their environment and learn through interesting and inviting play experiences. We spoke to staff about continuing to offer provocations, as described in the 'Raising the Ambition' document they made use of across the nursery. We saw how staff extended an interest in space, offering a broad range of learning opportunities, such as literacy. Children engaged meaningfully with the topic, resulting in fun and exciting play.

Staff were skilled in their use of questioning to encourage children to think about solutions and problem solving. Some staff had trained to deliver T.L.Q. (talking, listening and questions) which provided a focused approach to expressive language. We found that there was a clear focus on literacy and numeracy; however, we asked that staff ensure there is a balanced range of questioning to encourage discussions of different concepts such as weight, velocity and volume.

Children chose to use the outdoor space and staff were very responsive to their interests. This included recent improvements to the mud kitchen which provided rich and inviting play, such as making sensory soup with the nursery plants. They were provided with a range of quality experiences to help with creativity and to use their imagination, leading to children being curious and engaged.

We saw some children use fabrics and dressing-up outfits to good effect, using their imagination, which in turn stimulated their sense of fun, leading to laughter and co-operative play experiences.

Planning for play was informal, with staff using a general annual overview to offer play and learning experiences. The manager and staff should now develop this further to ensure that there was sufficient breadth and depth across the curriculum. This would support the tracking of individual children's progress and identify next steps. (See area for improvement 2 below.)

Parents, through our questionnaires, told us: "Excellent school. Incorporate all different types of learning inside and outside. Community involvement."

Areas for improvement

1. To contribute to children's health and well-being, the provider should ensure that personal plans show clear details of how each child is being supported.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met and my wishes and choices are respected' (HSCS 1.23).

2. To ensure staff provide children with well-planned play experiences, the staff team should ensure more detailed planning is developed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way which 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).

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question where strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

The playrooms and outdoor space were well planned to maximise children's play and learning experiences. Children told us they helped to change their environment: "We made this spaceship and it's going up to the moon."

We found that children could free-flow to the outdoors, which recognised the importance of choice for children. It was clear that children could choose, both inside and out, what to play with, when and where. The storage of construction materials and loose parts was well organised, ensuring children could be independent and empowered to be creative and have fun in their learning.

Children told us: "I've built a castle with a hundred blocks."

Parents' comments included: "My child's favourite part of the nursery is the outside area" and "They have an outside area and a playing area it's brilliant set up."

Children enjoyed the reading area which was well resourced. To improve the experience further, staff should consider providing a cosy armchair. We saw that there was water available outdoors and some sensory opportunities. These activities were available outside. It was discussed with the manager, and she noted that the 'messy' tray where the autumnal provocation was is regularly used for water, sand, slime, etcetera.

Although there was no obvious area for rest or sleep, staff described how they used floor mats and cosy covers in the quieter room should children need to relax. We encouraged staff to discuss this aspect of care with families as one response from the questionnaires 'strongly disagreed' that their child could rest or sleep if they wished.

Overall, the premises were bright, well-ventilated and provided sufficient space for the number of children attending.

Parents told us: "The nursery is kept clean by all staff however the school and nursery is in need of building maintenance."

We highlighted an issue of evidence of slugs in the snack room. Staff confirmed they were vigilant in ensuring children did not retrieve dropped food and that the matter had been raised with school contractors to address. Staff should now follow up on this. A trip hazard had been identified by the service through an incident and risk assessments; however, a solution had not yet been found to reduce the potential of a further incident. (See area of improvement 1 below.)

There were effective risk assessments carried out which were well recorded and had included the child's

voice, such as "be careful when carrying scissors" which meant that children were encouraged to develop life skills and keep themselves safe.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children access premises which are free from potential harm, the slug infestation should be effectively eradicated and matters identified following risk assessments are safely resolved.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment which is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question where strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Shared vision, values and aims were understood by staff which was positively informing practice. Staff were proactive in leading their own learning and taking forward their key areas of interest, such as STEM topics (Science, technology, engineering and maths).

Photographs of the nursery team, as well as key school staff members were displayed in the foyer which helped families become familiar with the people they would be meeting as they accessed nursery. We saw that parents were warmly welcomed into the nursery and the staff team were being proactive in having stay and play sessions and were introducing other options to engage in the service. This helped with inclusion and most parents 'strongly agreed' that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the setting. One respondent disagreed with this, which we shared with the service who agreed to continue to offer opportunities to be engaged in the life of the nursery.

Systems were in place to support continuous improvement. The manager had a clear focus on quality assurance and recognised the need to record evidence of her monitoring. This would help to demonstrate the development of the service. (See area for improvement 1 below.)

The headteacher had a role of oversight within the nursery, which included monitoring visits and supporting improvements, meaning the nursery team were seen as part of the school.

We found that parents and carers were welcomed into the nursery, where their feedback was welcomed by staff. Parents enjoyed the bright displays of children's learning and the opportunities to drop in to play alongside their child. Similarly, we saw good examples of where children were able to influence their nursery, such as through floor books and during risk assessments.

Areas for improvement

1. The service should improve the gathering and recording of evidence to support their improvement processes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question where strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

Staff were positive, friendly and enthusiastic. They engaged well with the inspection process which meant they were keen to continue to develop the nursery and share their successes. They worked well together, ensuring information was shared effectively across the team who largely worked part time. The manager agreed that developing a recording system to support relief staff to get to know children would be beneficial.

Staff were confident in their work and were deployed effectively to offer a good balance of skills across the nursery. Children were effectively supervised helping to keep them safe as they explored and played.

"All the teachers are very caring and my child likes them a lot. She is quite shy but they help her to feel confident and she has come along such a lot."

The responses from the parental questionnaires told us there was a high satisfaction rate, with 87% 'strongly agreeing' that there was enough staff and that they were appropriately skilled.

Further comments included:
"The nursery work as a great team due to good leadership. ('staff member') is approachable and caring and my child is very fond of her."

"I like ('staff member') because she's funny. I love ('staff member') the team are all brilliant teachers."

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

Children should be cared for by competent and confident staff who have appropriate skills and relevant knowledge of current childcare practice. The provider should ensure that there are systems in place which enable managers to have confidence that temporary staff are up to date with training like Child Protection.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 12-Confidence in staff and Standard 3-Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 14 September 2016.

Action taken since then

The current staff team were fully qualified, skilled and experienced. As the staff team was settled, no temporary staff were employed.

This recommendation is met.

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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