Park Nursery
Day Care of Children

Park Primary School
Ashwood Drive
Stranraer
DG9 7NW

Telephone: 01776 704 032

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 January 2024

Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003501

Service no:
CS2003015535

About the service

Park Nursery is registered to provide a care service to provide a care service to a maximum of 90 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 90 are aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school full time, with no more than 15 aged 2 to under 3. At the time of inspection no 2 year olds and registered with the service.

Park Nursery operates within Park Primary School which is situated in a residential area of Stranraer in Dumfries and Galloway. The nursery had recently had an extensive refurbishment throughout. Children had the use of one large playroom and a smaller playroom, both with direct access to a large outdoor space. A further room was used for the lunch service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 29 January 2024 from 10:00 to 16:30 and on 30 January 2024 from 09:00 to 13:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 people using the service
. gathered view from parents via Microsoft forms
. spoke with staff and management
. observed practice and daily life
. reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, safe, secure and had made positive relationships with other children and adults.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing care from adults who knew them very well.
- Children benefitted from a learning environment that promoted curiosity, independence and choice.
- The service was extremely well led from an inspiring, knowledgeable manager.
- Families were seen as true partners in their child's journey at Park Nursery.
- The staff team were passionate in providing the very best early learning and childcare to the children in Stranraer.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
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 key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced warm, nurturing care from adults that knew them very well. Positive relationships formed were resulting in children feeling loved and happy, as they received the right support from adults when needed. One parent told us, 'My child's individuality is nurtured and celebrated. His confidence has grown due to the care he receives and the high quality play and learning is evident in his learning journal and in his play at home.'

Children benefited from a staff team who knew them very well and spoke confidently about their care needs. Information from parents was recorded in personal plans when children started the service. Personal plans included strategies to support children's health, welfare and safety needs which were implemented and updated regularly. As a result, children were being supported to achieve their potential.

The manager and staff had very high aspirations for all children. They had an inclusive ethos, which was very well led by the manager, who had a proactive approach to seeking the right support for individual children. This meant that children were receiving the right care at the right time.

The service worked collaboratively with professionals and families to ensure children requiring additional support had their individual needs met. Information was used consistently and effectively to support positive outcomes for children. As a result, children were receiving the best care and support from the adults around them.

Children had lunch in a separate lunchroom at a time that suited them. Lunchtimes provided children with the opportunity to develop their independence skills. For example, they collected their own cutlery, poured their own drinks and could self-select a number of fruit and vegetables. Children took a lead role in the delivery of the lunchtime service. Lunchtime helpers had a job role and children took great pride in ticking their 'to do list' as they set up for lunch. As a result, children were developing some healthy eating habits and independence skills.

However, on the first day of inspection, staff did not always sit with the children. We discussed this with the manager and staff, and on the second day of inspection improvements had been made to allow staff to sit with children. As a result, staff were engaging in conversations and encouraging children to try new foods. The service should continue to monitor their lunch time routine to further support children to develop healthy eating habits.

Children were treated with respect and dignity, this included where children required support with personal care needs. For example, a mirror was provided for children after lunch to help them identify if they needed to use a face cloth. This meant that children felt safe, secure, and confident in the setting.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality play experiences. Children were excited to show us what they liked to do at nursery. One child asked us 'Would you like a tour?' This demonstrated to us that children had ownership of their nursery and felt confident in the setting.

Planning approaches were responsive and child-centred. For example, an interest in letters had resulted in a visit from the postman and there were plans in place for a visit to the local sorting office. This meant that children's interests were valued.

Children experienced rich and meaningful play opportunities to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. For example, mark making, dominoes and role play. One parent told us, As a result, children were developing a range of skills.

Staff were knowledgeable about child development including theories and good practice guidance that support play and learning. Interventions were used in a meaningful way to enhance the child's experience. For example TACPAC, this is a structured programme to enhance communication through touch and music. This allowed play experiences to be matched to the children's level which ensured progression in learning.

Children had varied opportunities throughout the day to reflect on their learning. Pictures and documentation of children's previous experiences were visible through personal learning plans and floorbooks. This allowed children to review their learning and set their own next steps with the support of staff.

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2: children experience high quality facilities.

The setting was comfortable, furnished to a high standard, and provided plenty of natural light. This made children feel welcomed in the setting. Children had a variety of play spaces including two indoor playrooms, a small outdoor space to the rear of the setting and a large outdoor area. As a result, children were developing independence as they freely moved between spaces.

The setting had recently benefitted from an extensive refurbishment. The manager and staff had worked hard to support children through this transition. The outdoor space was still in the process of being upgraded. Staff spoke passionately about their plans for the garden space. Children and families had been consulted throughout the process, as well as community partners. As a result, children were happy, settled and secure in their new setting.

Play spaces, both indoors and out, were creatively structured and matched the learning and development stages of children attending. The well planned indoor and outdoor spaces provided welcoming, interesting, and exciting areas for children to explore. One parent told us, 'It is a wonderful, nurturing environment that encourages my child to be curious, creative and confident. He loves to go to nursery!' Staff spoke to us about constantly evaluating the learning environment with a focus on children's rights and freedom of choice. We would encourage the service to continue with these plans.

The play spaces and resources had been set out and presented to the children in creative ways that invited them to learn. Children had access to a wide range of resources that were very organised and tidy. The creative play spaces sparked curiosity, enquiry, imagination, and problem solving. For example, sewing, tinker table and loose parts. As a result, children were encouraged to use creative thinking strategies.

The committed and passionate staff team were excited about the experiences and plans they had on offer for children. They continually review their learning environments to ensure they are fun exciting spaces for the children to play and learn. We encouraged staff to continue to review the spaces as children learn and develop. This meant that children experienced high quality environments to play and learn.

Children had a variety of opportunities to assess and manage their own risks. This was supported by staff that encouraged and supported children at the right level. As a result, children were confident in their surroundings.

Risk assessments were in place and regularly reviewed by the whole staff team. Effective arrangements were in place to monitor and maintain the setting and the equipment used. Robust infection prevention and control practices were evident, including when preparing and serving food. This meant that children were kept safe and healthy.

How good is our leadership? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well.

The service was exceptionally led by a strong, approachable manager who delegated responsibility appropriately to staff and involved them in the development of the service. Outstanding direction was provided to the team who were passionate and extremely focused on providing children and families with positive experiences. This meant that there was high staff morale which impacted positively on children's experiences.

The passionate and enthusiastic team were fully committed to delivering high quality experiences for children and families. There was a shared vision which valued provision of high-quality learning experiences. We saw practice that reflected this vision. For example, the staff team were committed to providing a learning environment that promoted independence and choice. As a result, children were safe, secure and happy in the setting.

The current improvement plan was targeted and focused on outcomes for children. The inspirational manager enabled children and staff to play a key role in leading improvements in the setting. There was a strong focus on improving children's language and communication. This was done through a measured, planned approach, which was informed by current best practice guidance and research. Improvements were continually thoroughly evaluated and included the views of children, their families, and other professionals. As a result, improvements in the setting were having a positive impact on outcomes for children.

Robust self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were leading to improved outcomes for children. Children, families and staff were regularly involved in giving feedback about the service and suggestions on how it could be improved. The reflective team effectively used a range of methods to reflect on and improve their practice. As a result, children benefitted from a team who continually strived for excellence.

The aspirational goals of the team to provide high quality early learning and childcare meant that staff were reflective of the needs of families and children. As a result of the empowering ethos created by the manager, the team supported each other in a true shared leadership approach. This showed us that there was a collaborative approach to improvement and as a result, the team provided high quality play experiences.

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.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

The children benefitted from being cared for by a committed staff team who were passionate and proud to work at Park Nursery. Staff were kind, warm and nurturing to the children and their families. All of the parents' feedback was very positive about the staff team and their skills. They told us, 'They are all fantastic. Couldn't ask for better people to care for my child. There is always plenty of happy smiley faces every morning and pick up time.' This ensured positive relationships were formed between staff, the children, and their families.

There was an appropriate number of staff throughout the day to ensure the wellbeing of all children. Staff were deployed to areas that best met their skills, knowledge, and experience. This meant that children benefited from high quality experiences and positive engagement.

The staff team had established positive working relationships with each other, creating an inclusive, motivated and solution focussed team. Ongoing reflection on their practice ensured an ethos of continuous improvement. This meant that staff were able to develop professionally and provided children with a happy and supportive environment.

Arrangements were in place to support smooth transitions throughout the day. Staff worked effectively together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagements with children. For example, staff lunches were well planned to minimise the impact on the children while enabling staff time to rest and be refreshed. The service had a positive ethos of attendance. As a result, there was continuity of care for children by staff who knew them very well.

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
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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