Larbert Village Primary School, Early Learning and Childcare Class
Day Care of Children

Main Street
Larbert
FK5 3AS

Telephone: 01324 503 420

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 November 2023

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
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CS2003015566

About the service

Larbert Village Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class is in Larbert, Falkirk. The nursery is in a purpose-built extension in the grounds of the school. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 36 children from the age of three years to those not yet attending primary school.

Children have access to a playroom, enclosed garden, toilet facilities and other areas within the school. The nursery is close to local amenities, green spaces and can be reached by transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 1 November 2023 between 10:00 and 17:00 and continued on Thursday 2 November 2023. Feedback was given to the service following the inspection. 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 children and observed their play
- spoke with nine families during our visit. A further six families provided feedback via an electronic link
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

• Children experienced nurturing, caring and warm interactions from staff who respected them as unique individuals.
• Staff were skilled at supporting children to lead their interests through quality interactions and effective questioning that promoted deeper learning.
• Staff worked well together and were clear about their roles in meeting children's needs.
• Children benefitted from regular connections and learning in their wider community.
• Staff promoted children's rights through high quality play and learning experiences.
• The service promoted a culture of respect and inclusion.
• Staff valued the importance of partnerships with families to support positive outcomes for children.
• Children had fun as they engaged with high quality resources in well-structured and inspiring spaces.

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?	5 - Very 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? 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

Interactions between staff and children were warm, kind, and caring. Staff knew children well and showed a genuine interest in their individual needs and preferences. Families told us "I know that my child is loved, and they have a nurturing relationship with their keyworker and other staff.", "Larbert Village Nursery is such a calming and welcoming environment with such nurturing staff." Children said staff are good at "giving cuddles, making them happy.", "Everyone is nice." As a result, positive attachments had been formed that supported children's wellbeing.

Staff were committed to getting it right for every child through effective partnership working with families and other agencies. An agency commented on how well the nursery had done in putting strategies in place for a child. Children were visited at home, getting to know staff before they came to the setting. This ensured families were involved in planning for a smooth transition from home to nursery. Establishing connections with children meant staff were familiar with what was important to them. Families told us "Staff are very friendly and understand children's needs.", "I am so thankful for the care they have received and the experiences they have had.", "The team don't just work with children, they support the family, and that means a lot." As a result, children and family's needs were met through caring, responsive interactions and positive trusting relationships.

Children's emotional wellbeing was supported by staff who were highly skilled at reading children's cues and responding to their needs. Staff were aware that the changes in the time meant some children's routines had been affected and this had an impact on how they were in the setting. Staff offered cuddles and reassurance and ensured that children could rest and relax in cosy, comfortable spaces. Many children used these areas throughout the day. As a result, they felt safe and secure as their needs were met.

Children were supported to understand their rights as staff used creative and fun ways to promote these. For example, the wellbeing indicators known as SHANARRI, (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) were promoted through everyday conversations and celebrating children's successes. Children were encouraged to display what was important to them under the wellbeing headings in the room. They engaged with the wellbeing characters that had been created and used these in their play across the provision. As a result, children were learning about their rights in meaningful ways.

Mealtimes offered children opportunities to develop life skills. They were involved in planning snack menus, setting the area, preparing foods, and learning how to use kitchen utensils safely. Children had choice when they ate. This meant their play and learning was not disrupted. Staff sat with children engaged in meaningful discussions. Every child at the table was included as staff knew what was important to them and showed a genuine interest in what they had to say. As a result, children experienced a relaxed, unhurried mealtime that ensured a positive, sociable experience.

Children had personal plans in place known as 'what matters to me'. These were completed with detail and ensured children's thoughts, feelings and what was important to them was recorded. Staff valued every child as a unique individual and respected them for who they are. Plans were reviewed regularly with families and children. All staff knew what was important to each child as they took the time to get to know them.

Families commented "The staff team are very nurturing and take time to get to know their children. My child feels valued and part of the Larbert Village Family.", "The staff are very professional and take a great interest in each child having a positive and happy nursery experience." This meant staff were committed to meeting children's needs and families had confidence in the team.

Quality indicator 1.3-Play and learning

Children were actively leading their play and learning. Staff were highly skilled at engaging with children at their level to extend their interests. We asked children what they thought staff were good at. They told us "Staff are good at asking us." Staff valued the importance of children having autonomy in their play. They had a very good understanding of their role in promoting deeper learning and engagement. On the day of our visit a group of children had shown an interest in trains. Staff responded by organising a trip to the local train station. As a result, children were able to connect their interest and learn through real life experiences.

Planning was responsive to children's interests and ideas. Staff offered a balance of intentional promotion activities that extended learning. Children talked about Bonfire night, staff engaged in meaningful discussions and provided resources that promoted children to create their ideas. Families told us the team are good at "Helping children to improve their learning, exploring new ways, learning new skills, and improving confidence.", "The nursery has a good structure to encourage a broad range of learning." This meant that staff valued children's ideas and ensured they made progress across the breadth of the curriculum.

Children benefitted from inviting and well resourced continued provision. Staff skilfully created rich and purposeful spaces indoors and outdoors that promoted children's holistic development. They told us "I love my nursery, it is good.", "There is lots to play with.", "I like the water and going on the train.", and "This is great fun." Staff supported and extended interests, whilst valuing the importance of children being leaders of their learning. This ensured children had a breadth of opportunities that promoted creativity, problem solving and imagination.

Children were able to revisit and talk about what they had enjoyed learning about in their journals. Observations and pictures captured rich and meaningful learning. Journals were shared with families online. Staff were mindful of children having the opportunity to access their journal to share learning. They offered time everyday for them to come together and talk about what was important to them. Families contributed to online journals and children were able to talk about learning from home. Journals were completed to a very high standard and showed children making progress. Families told us they really liked the journals as it allowed them to see how children had spent their day.

Children were supported to make progress in literacy and numeracy through well planned, fun activities. The environment offered children opportunities to mark make, share stories with friends, and learn about numbers through play. Staff engaged children in meaningful conversations and asked them if they would like to add their thoughts and feelings onto the floor diary. This supported them to develop skills in talking in small groups and recording their ideas. Staff valued the importance songs and stories had on children's development. They offered daily opportunities to take part in 'one story and two songs'. Children enjoyed this rich and well planned experience. They were able to take home learning bags to share with families. Bags had been well planned to ensure activities were fun, engaging and supported learning at home. As a result, children developed skills in numeracy and literacy through fun and interactive play.

The team had strong connections with their families and the wider community. Families had regular opportunities to spend time in the setting with their child. Regular open evenings, stay and play sessions, wood work and clay workshops and book bug sessions were available. Families told us "Family learning is great, my child talks a lot about that.", "We enjoy these sessions, this allows us to spend time in the setting", and "There is a strong ethos of community learning that is evident in the experiences provided.", "There is a wide range of activities and plenty of opportunities for parental participation". As a result, families had fun as they engaged in learning, supporting them to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of play.

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

Children played in a purpose-built playroom that benefitted from an additional smaller space that was quiet, cosy, and calm. They were able to access toilet facilities independently. A large, enclosed garden area and access to the school gym hall provided lots of opportunities to further extend their wellbeing and learning.

Spaces were well furnished, comfortable, and maintained to a very high standard. Children benefitted from lots of natural light and ventilation as the playroom door was always open. This allowed children to access the outdoor provision as they chose. Families commented "The setting is cosy and intimate. The size of the setting means my child is fortunate enough to experience well planned, personalised experiences."

Indoor and outdoor spaces were sensitively structured to meet children's stages of development and interests. It was clear staff took pride in offering children inviting areas that sparked curiosity and imagination. This was further enhanced with their creative approaches and use of quality resources and varied loose parts to support learning.

The service had effective systems in place for the monitoring and reporting of maintenance issues. Staff worked well together and carried out daily checks of the environment to ensure spaces and resources were safe for children. Risk assessments were in place and were reviewed regularly with the team. Children were fully involved in learning about risk and how to manage this in their play. For example, through conversations and effective questioning, staff stayed close and asked, "do you feel safe?". This supported children to assess risk for themselves and develop important skills for life. This meant children's play and learning was not stopped and they were able to enjoy challenging and fun activities.

Children experienced care and support from a staff team that understood and implemented effective infection, prevention, and control measures. Robust hand hygiene routines were embedded. Children and staff washed their hands at key times throughout the day. This meant that children's health and wellbeing was promoted.

How good is our leadership? 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 3.1 -Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Children and families experienced a welcoming, warm, and inclusive ethos that was felt on entering the setting. Staff's passion and commitment to working with children and families was evident in their vision, values, and aims. They provide play-based nurturing and stimulating environments where children were supported to develop their capabilities and skills for life. Staff had fostered strong and trusting connections with families. As a result, children developed confidence and were supported to reach their full potential.

Staff respected and valued children as unique individuals. A child friendly poster displayed at child's height showed them what they could expect from the service and how this would be achieved. Children used this poster to recall their favourite activities and plan future learning. This gave a strong message that children mattered.

The service was led well by a supportive and committed management team that promoted a culture of care, respect, inclusion and leadership at all levels. Leaders valued the staff team and recognised their commitment and passion for their role and their dedication to training and development. Every member of the team played a vital part in delivering a high-quality service that had high aspirations for children. The team had a wealth of knowledge and understanding in the theory and practice of play. This meant that children experienced care, support and depth of learning from a team that was invested in supporting positive outcomes.

Each member of staff had a key role in driving forward the service improvement priorities. This included implementing systems that ensured all children made progress, further developing staff's skills in Froebelian practice and developing leadership roles through professional learning. We asked children and families if there were improvements the service could make. Most families told us there were no improvements needed. They commented "the service is fantastic", "amazing" and "They are doing a great job, and we are very much satisfied." This meant children continued to be supported to reach their full potential through high quality play and learning led by a highly skilled, committed, and passionate team.

Children and families were actively involved in evaluating the service and experiences offered. It was important to the team to gather feedback to support their self-evaluation process. Staff used the feedback to continually develop the setting. We could see the cycle of evaluation was embedded as staff continually reflected. They had a very good awareness of their improvement journey and looking forwards in planning how they continue to ensure high quality play and learning is at the heart of the setting. Their commitment to getting it right for their children and families was commendable.

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

Children experienced care and support from a committed and caring team. One family commented "It is evident that the Early Years Officers enjoy their roles and genuinely care for the children. They are approachable and accommodating and I feel they know my child really well." This meant children were supported to thrive and flourish.

Staff and management were committed to supporting each other to ensure continuity of care for children. Their flexible approach meant that they were able to respond to children and families individual needs. The service benefited from an additional member of staff. This role was used effectively and meant children's learning and interests were extended through high quality engagement with staff.

Communication with families was important to the service. Daily chats, updates through the online app and regular progress meetings ensured families felt included and well informed. Families told us that communication was very good and they liked the regular updates online. Families also used the app to share learning from home. They told us "Staff always take forward my child's interests from home making them feel valued." This meant children's holistic learning and progress was captured.

The team valued the effective communication they had in place. They worked well together and ensured there was time each day to discuss children, what was important to them and their next steps in learning. This meant that everyone was included and were clear about their role and responsibilities to support outcomes for all children.

Staff valued the differing skills, experience, and knowledge of the team. This complemented the high-quality learning through play offered to children. The culture of respect and support for each other meant that staff received mentoring and guidance at a pace that was right for them. Staff told us they felt valued, included and 'loved' working in the setting.

Busier times of the day were well managed and ensured children were safe and their learning supported. One member of staff greeted families at the entrance, taking time to share important information about how children had spent their day whilst other team members engaged with children in the playroom. This meant that staff were focussed on meeting children's needs. Staff had consulted families on the drop of and pick up arrangements and shared their reasoning for this. Families liked the arrangements as it meant staff were fully engaged with children and they had opportunities to spend time in the setting at other times in the week.

Children benefitted from a service that valued their right to play, grow and learn. They had fun through high quality, meaningful interactions, positive relationships, and inspiring provision. Families commented "The experiences provided for the children, indoors and outdoors, is fantastic. "The open-ended play experiences offered lends itself to endless opportunities. The staff know our child and our child is very happy!", "Big thanks to all the staff for giving their best and for all their support and care". As a result, children, families, and staff are very happy with the service provided at Larbert Village Early Learning and Childcare Class.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

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

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