Southmuir Pre School Class
Day Care of Children

Prosen Road
Kirriemuir
DD8 5AT

Telephone: 01575 526 013

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 May 2023

Service provided by:
Angus Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000043

Service no:
CS2003015775

About the service

Southmuir Pre School Class is registered to provide a daycare service to a maximum of 50 children at any one time, aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school, with a maximum of ten children in the eligible 2-3 year age range.

The service provider is Angus Council and the service is situated within Southmuir Primary School, which is located in a residential area of Kirriemuir. The children have access to two playrooms, from which they can enter into secure outdoor play spaces. They also have access to a wooded area behind the primary school playground and facilities within the school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 and 16 May 2023 between 09:30 and 15:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 16 May 2023. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:
- observed practice and daily life;
- spoke with staff and management;
- reviewed documents;
- spoke with children using the service and eight of their family members.

Key messages

• Overall, staff were kind and caring, however, there were times that children did not experience nurturing approaches.

• Staff built positive relationships with children and their families.

• Children were happy, having fun and confident leading their own play both indoors and outdoors.

• Children could make lots of choices about their play and learning.

• Staff worked proactively with parents and relevant professionals to support children's needs and a continuity of care and support.

• The service should continue to review and develop mealtimes to ensure they are consistently nurturing and promote a positive experience.

• The service should continue to review and develop the environment, to ensure children consistently benefit from rich play spaces and quality resources.

• Improvements were needed to staff deployment. This is to support children to experience consistently positive outcomes, and to ensure they are cared for by the right number of adults to meet their needs.

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, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support
Overall, children experienced care which was nurturing and responsive to their needs. Children were happy and relaxed within the service. Most staff were nurturing, kind and gentle in their approach, offering cuddles and comfort and supporting the care needs of the children. However, we did observe that at times in the 2-3 provision, staff did not consistently respond to children in a warm and nurturing way. Children would have benefited from the support of additional staff within the 2-3 provision room, to ensure their needs were met and care and play fully supported.

Staff knew children well and spoke knowledgably and confidently about children's individual care needs and used their knowledge to tailor support. As a result children were supported to reach their full potential. Positive relationships had been developed with the children. This supported them to feel safe and secure during their time at the service.

Children's care and wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Personal plans were developed with parents and reviewed at least once a term to support the changing needs of children. Plans helped staff to promote consistency and continuity of care between home and nursery and allowed staff to adapt their practice to meet children's care needs. Children who required additional support had enhanced plans in place. Plans were detailed and identified specific strategies to support children's individual needs

Mealtimes in the 3-5 provision were a calm and positive social experience. A rolling snack allowed children choice in when they ate and minimised disruptions to play. Opportunities for children to prepare foods supported their independence and allowed them to develop life skills. Staff sat with children to role model healthy eating habits and promote social skills. This also ensured children were kept safe as they ate. Mealtimes were unhurried and children could try a variety of nutritious foods at a pace that suited them.

Lunch in the 2-3 provision was an inconsistent experience for children. On the first day of inspection lunch was not calm and relaxed. Staff were at times task driven which meant they could not always sit with children to support them with the routine. This resulted in children becoming distracted and some leaving the table, with missed opportunities to promote a positive social experience and develop children's skills. Lunch on the second day of inspection was a much more positive and calm experience. Staff supported children well and were less task driven. This allowed them to sit with children to support with eating and promote quality interactions. The service should ensure that mealtimes for all children are consistently positive. **(See area for improvement 1**).

Children benefited from a team who were proactive in reaching out to external agencies. Staff were committed to providing high quality care to all children and sought advice from professionals and welcomed multi-agency working. This ensured children received the right care and support, resulting in positive outcomes. This included effective partnership working with parents to develop shared strategies, which contributed to a continuity of care.

Children's safety and wellbeing benefited from a staff team who had a good understanding in their role of

identifying, recording and referring any safeguarding concerns. Procedures and regular training were in place to support this.

Children's medical needs were well understood by staff and reviewed with parents and carers. Most medication records were completed in a way that ensured the service had detailed information to support the safe administration of medicine to children. However, we did ask staff to ensure all records are fully completed by parents and reviewed at least three monthly in line with best practice guidance. This would reduce any potential confusion about children's medical needs and ensure information is current.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were confident, content and it was clear from their smiles and laughter they were having fun. Children were actively involved in leading their play through a good balance of planned and spontaneous experiences. Through observations of children's play, staff responded to children's interests to support child-centred opportunities. This meant that children experienced meaningful and stimulating activities.

A variety of resources and experiences promoted children's curiosity and excitement, encouraging them to be creative and develop imaginative skills. For example, children explored ingredients to make playdough and used their creations to role play being in a café and serving food.

Group times provided opportunities to develop children's social skills and their skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Children enjoyed listening to stories and joined in with action songs. Literacy and numeracy development was further promoted through the provision of books, writing materials and environmental print. We suggested the service could extend the use of real life resources such as clocks and measuring tools to promote literacy and numeracy naturally throughout the environment.

Many positive staff interactions were observed to effectively support children in their play and learning. Open-ended questions used by several of the staff encouraged children's thinking skills, problem solving and curiosity. This could be extended further throughout the team to support extend children's learning and engagement.

Most children were engaged in their play through a variety of learning experiences on offer to support fun and provide appropriate challenge for children's stage of development. However, there were also numerous missed learning opportunities, where staff either did not notice cues from children or due to staffing numbers could not effectively support children in their play. Staff were attentive and involved in children's play but were not always able to provide the appropriate support to fully engage children.

Children's learning and achievements were captured in journals and the quality of observations on the whole were good. Most observations identified some skills and learning and staff had identified appropriate next steps to support children achieve their potential. Staff carried out tracking of children's learning progress. This helped to identify the specific needs of children, supporting staff to plan the next steps in children's development .

Children were accessing the wider community as the nursery was an integral part of the wider school community. This promoted their self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Regular visits to the urban farm and forest areas extended play opportunities and provided rich learning experiences.

Areas for improvement

1. Mealtimes needed to be further developed to ensure that children are consistently experiencing a relaxed, unhurried and in a pleasant atmosphere that meets their needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state 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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities
Playrooms were bright and spacious, allowing children to move freely and explore their surroundings. Playrooms were well equipped to offer a range of spaces where children could play, relax and spend time in small groups. They benefited from access to smaller rooms which allowed better engagement in focussed play opportunities. Where children required additional support, these smaller rooms enabled them to be part of smaller groups which helped them settle and engage in learning experiences.

Displays of children's artwork, creations and photographs contributed to children having ownership of the environment and provided the message they mattered. Homely touches such as soft lighting and furnishings contributed to a welcoming feel.

All children had free-flow access to the garden which provided choice and an opportunity for independence. Outdoor space had recently been extended within the 2-3 provision which had been a positive addition, providing larger space, and a variety of play spaces for children to explore and learn. Children were confident moving around the playrooms and between the indoor and outdoor spaces. This showed us children felt safe and secure in the nursery environment.

The layout of playrooms and resources ensured that children could move around freely and access additional resources independently to extend their play. Spaces were set up thoughtfully and to spark children's curiosity and interest. Most resources were of a high quality and provided rich learning opportunities. We found that a small number of resources were broken and not well-maintained. It would be beneficial for staff to carry out an audit to ensure all resources are of a high standard and fit for purpose.

Furniture was age and stage appropriate and ensured children could play and learn comfortably. This included specialised equipment for the specific needs of some children. This meant children were safe and included. There were cosy areas for children to relax which supported their wellbeing.

Children were kept safe as staff were always vigilant about accounting for them. Staff ensured doors to the setting were secured appropriately when children were arriving or leaving. Daily checks of the premises were completed and there were risk assessments in place to ensure that the environment was safe for the children attending. There was a system to report any repairs and maintenance issues. Children were well supported to assess risk in their play and were confident in setting themselves challenge and were developing problem solving skills to safely manage risk.

Good infection prevention and control measures supported children's health and wellbeing. Staff carried out effective handwashing and children were sensitively supported to follow good hand hygiene routines. This helped to minimise the spread of germs and protected children's health. The setting was well ventilated to provide fresh air throughout the day.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement

Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well
The leadership team engaged very well during the inspection process, demonstrating an ethos of continuous improvement. The nursery was led by a confident and passionate senior practitioner who provided a clear vision for the service. This resulted in a positive working environment where staff felt confident to share ideas to initiate change and were encouraged to share the responsibilities. Staff told us that overall they felt well supported and included, and our discussions highlighted that they were motivated.

The service had a quality assurance calendar in place to review aspects of practice throughout the year. In addition best practice guidance 'How good is our early learning and childcare' and 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare', supported the team to continually evaluate their provision and improvement journey. For example, they used challenge questions to gather evidence and evaluate experiences for children and families. These helped to set achievable improvements and provided positive outcomes for children.

The service improvement plan was underpinned by relevant local and national guidance and legislative frameworks, and was a useful tool for improvement. This enabled the team to identify strengths and areas to improve outcomes for children and their families. There needed to be more targeted focus on driving these improvements forward to support staff enhance outcomes for children.

Delegated leadership roles were at times unclear. For example, our discussions highlighted that practice observations and supervision opportunities were not currently part of quality assurance processes, and the team were unclear as to who was responsible for these. It would be beneficial for the leadership team to delegate and clarify roles within the team. This would ensure staff understood the expectations around different roles and carrying out tasks to support improvements were done in an effective and timely way.

Our observations highlighted that children's voice was valued in the service. Opportunities for children to share their ideas and influence their learning was part of daily experiences. Through observations of play and daily discussions, staff responded to children's interests and suggestions. Children were supported to share and record their ideas in floor books, mind maps and journals. This resulted in children being empowered, valued and allowed them to drive change.

Information was shared with parents regularly through a variety of methods such as, email, online platforms, face to face discussions and regular progress meetings. Families told us they received regular communication and staff always made time to share what children had been learning. There were some opportunities for families to formally evaluate the service through questionnaires. This supported them to share their views and suggestions. The service should continue to develop ways in which families can evaluate the service and have their suggestions used to support improvements.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement

Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment
The deployment of staff supported children to be cared for by familiar adults who knew them well. This helped the development of secure attachments. Planned and unplanned absences were managed well. The effective planning of staff breaks minimised the impact on the children whilst enabling staff time to rest and refresh. In addition, staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit the children.

Whilst there were enough staff within the service, they were not always effectively deployed to meet the needs of all children. The larger team working in the 3-5 provision of the service was well staffed, which allowed them to respond consistently to children's interests and needs. The smaller team working in the 2-3 provision, although working within ratios were unable to meet the needs of children consistently throughout the day. This resulted in missed opportunities to engage children in play and enrich learning experiences. We discussed with the senior management team the need to review the staffing of rooms to ensure that all children's needs are met by the right number of people to ensure positive outcomes. This was an area for improvement made at the previous inspection and will be reinstated.
(See area for improvement 1).

The team were committed to providing a positive experience for all children. Most were consistently warm and friendly in their approach which promoted a happy and fun environment where children could play and learn. Regular team meetings provided opportunities for staff to come together and discuss information about the service, for example, information on individual children, best practice documents and planning for a variety of experiences. This created opportunities for staff to plan for children's needs. As a result, children experienced a good level of care and support.

Professional development was ongoing for staff, which resulted in a team who participated in continuous learning to extend their knowledge and skills. This was supported by sessions where staff were able to discuss, share learning, using reflection to positively inform practice. Staff were encouraged to source specific training which related to their roles and the needs of the children they worked with. This meant the differing experiences, knowledge and skills of staff promoted positive outcomes and experiences for children.

Areas for improvement

1. Staff deployment should account for the individual needs of children to ensure there are enough staff to provide consistent care and support to children throughout the day.

This is in order to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that:
"I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity." (HSCS 4.16)

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

Meal and snack times needed to be further developed to ensure that children are being offered food choices during times that are relaxed, unhurried and in a pleasant atmosphere that meets their needs.

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

This area for improvement was made on 2 December 2019.

Action taken since then
Mealtimes were not consistently relaxed, nurturing and positive. Whilst mealtimes in the 3-5 provision provided calm and positive experiences, mealtimes in the 2-3 provision varied during our inspection visit. The service should make improvements to mealtimes to ensure children throughout the service experience positive mealtimes.

This area for improvement has been continued.

Previous area for improvement 2

Children in the younger provision require consistent and enough staff to meet their individual needs.

This is in order to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
"I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity." (HSCS 4.16)

This area for improvement was made on 2 December 2019.

Action taken since then
Although working within ratios, there were not enough staff to consistently meet the needs of children within the 2-3 provision resulting in missed opportunities to engage children in play and enrich learning experiences.

This area for improvement will continue.

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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.