Strathmiglo Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

111 High Street
Strathmiglo
Cupar
KY14 7PT

Telephone: 01334 659 443

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 April 2023

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003015911

About the service

Strathmiglo Primary School Nursery is in a cabin within the grounds of the primary school. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time from three years of age to an age to attend primary school.

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

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 April 2023 between 09:15 and 17:15. 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 using the service
- received feedback from three families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were settled, happy and having fun as they engaged in sustained play.
- Staff were nurturing, caring, and supported children's interests.
- Play spaces reflected children's learning and offered rich play experiences.
- Children benefited from care and support from a team that supported positive outcomes.
- The service should look at ways to develop their mealtime experience to reflect the independent opportunities children have at snack time.
- The service should update risk assessments regularly with staff to ensure any risks are minimised.

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?	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? 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support
Children experienced warm, nurturing approaches from staff who knew their individual needs and preferences. Staff were kind, calm and compassionate, and children were cuddled and reassured when needed. Children were confident as they played and staff were engaged with them at their level. One parent described staff as having 'patience for children to learn at their own pace.' This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Children were supported with personal care routines from a staff team that respected their privacy and dignity. Interactions were positive and kind, demonstrating there were positive relationships between staff and children.

Mealtimes provided some opportunities for children to develop independence skills. Children were able to choose when they had snack during the morning and some children enjoyed their snack outdoors. Children were involved in the planning and preparation of snacks linked to current interests and planned learning. Staff had recognised this was an important experience to allow children to have choice over when to have snack and finish their play. At lunch time, children had to stop their play and walk to the school dining hall. We encouraged the service to look at ways children could enjoy a free flow lunch time that provides opportunities to develop important independence skills and offers choice in when to eat. (See area for improvement 1)

Children's wellbeing was supported through personal planning. Children were encouraged to have ownership of their Personal Learning Journal (PLJ's) as they were easily accessible within the room. Children and families were regularly involved in reviewing plans and agreeing next steps in learning. Children enjoyed showing us their journals and talking about fun experiences. Some children had additional plans in place in line with the wellbeing indicators. This supported a co-ordinated approach when working with other agencies to ensure positive outcomes.

At the time of our visit one child required medication to be administered. Medication forms had been completed with detail. We reminded the service that medication should be reviewed regularly in line with guidance. We signposted them to the 'Care Inspectorate Management of medication in day care of children and children services.'

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning
Children experienced a stimulating environment that was rich and varied in provisions. Staff had created inviting areas that were reflective of children's interests and promoted independence. For example, children were able to make their own playdough and experiment with colour as they mixed paints to create their ideas. They told us they liked to play outside looking for bugs, make pancakes and paint flowers. As a result, children played for extended periods.

Children were meaningfully involved in leading their play. Staff were skilled at extending learning through effective questioning at children's level, resulting in high quality engagement. Planning for children's experiences were consistent through a balance of responsive and intentional approaches. For example, children were learning about the jobs people do. Learning was displayed at child's height. This allowed children to revisit learning, add their ideas and questions about what they would like to learn about next. This gave a strong message that children matter. Current learning had been an interest for a period of time, and resulted in visits from the local farmer and a scientist who talked to children about their jobs. Children told us about the visit from the tractor and were able to recall what they had learned. This meant children had fun as they engaged in real experiences.

Staff were creative in their approaches to supporting children to develop language, literacy, and numeracy through play. For example, children helped set the snack area, they counted out plates, and staff used mathematical language during conversations as they supported children. The environment was rich in literacy and numeracy resources, such as books, natural materials for exploring, print and plentiful opportunities for mark making. This meant that children developed an understanding of literacy and numeracy naturally as they played.

Staff made very good use of the local community to enhance children's play. Children had regular access to the large school garden where they were able to engage with nature and learn about the life cycles of creatures. Visits to the woods every week gave children the freedom to explore and develop their ideas, learn about the changing seasons, and use their imagination as they played with friends. Parents liked how children had regular opportunities to learn outdoors. This meant that children made strong connections with their local community.

Children's emotional wellbeing was supported by a team that understood child development, theory and how this supported their practice. For example, staff engaged in professional reading to deepen their knowledge of wider factors that contribute to a child's development. As a result, children and families received support from a team that were committed to improving outcomes.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure a high quality lunch time experience that meets children's needs, the service should review their current mealtime routine to promote children's independence in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere.

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 snacks and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children had access to a playroom, large enclosed garden, toilet facilities, and other areas within the school grounds. The setting was comfortable, furnished to a high standard and cosy. The playroom benefited from natural light and ventilation. New blinds had been fitted to the windows offering shade when needed. This meant children could play in comfortable spaces.

The service had policies in place to support the safe delivery of the service in line with local authority guidance that ensured a consistent approach. Staff carried out daily visual checks of the indoors and outdoors environment. Maintenance issues were reported and rectified in a timely manner. We suggested these checks include ensuring worktop areas are free from any potential risks to children. (See area for improvement 1)

Detailed risk assessments recorded how staff minimised risks to children in the play spaces. We reminded the service that risk assessments should be reviewed regularly with staff to ensure they are meaningful and effective. This would support the service to continue to keep children safe in all spaces.

At the previous inspection, we recommended the nursery should encourage children to wash their hands after playing in the garden to minimise risk of infection. Children washed their hands after playing outdoors and at other key times throughout the day. This meant that children's health and wellbeing was promoted through effective infection prevention and control practices. We were confident this area of improvement had been met.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure everyone continues keeping children safe, the service should review and update their approaches in risk assessing the environment. These should reflect the current service and state the steps that will be followed to minimise risks. This should include, but is not limited to, the environment and equipment.

This is to ensure that Care and Support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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 areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well
There was a welcoming ethos within the service that put children at the heart of their vision to provide a fun, safe, and creative environment. Their improvement plan focussed on developing literacy through play, and partnership working with families.

Staff were creative in their approach to working with families and engaged in continuous reflections to ensure they were offering a varied family engagement programme. Staff had engaged in continuous self-evaluation of their improvement journey and shared this progress. Families and children were regularly consulted to gather their views and ideas, and these were displayed in the nursery. This meant that children benefited from a service that understood the importance of continuous improvements.

Management had created conditions where staff felt confident to initiate and lead on areas of interest. For example, one staff member led on offering learning in the garden and included families in this. Another led on science, technology, engineering, and Maths (STEM) to enhance learning through play, and worked with colleagues in the school and across other services to share good practice. Staff spoke confidently about their leadership roles and the positive impact this had on outcomes for children.

The service had some evidence of their quality assurance systems. These included monitoring of children's journals to ensure every child was supported to make progress across the breadth of the curriculum. Monitoring of their accident and incident systems ensured children's safety and wellbeing. The service had plans in place to further develop their quality assurance systems in line with current guidance. We encouraged them to continue with this.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staffing levels were favourable on the day of our visit. Staff worked well together as their skill mix and experience complement each other. Staff valued their colleagues and supported each other which had created a culture of respect. Arrangements were in place to support continuity of care across the day. For example, staff breaks were well planned to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

Staff were clear about the routines of the day, and deployed themselves to ensure children experienced a breadth of learning to meet their individual needs and preferences. This meant that staff were engaged with children at their level to support play and learning.

The service used a variety of methods to communicate and share learning with families. These included termly newsletters, calls, online platforms, and daily chats at drop off and pick up. This meant that families knew about future events and what children had been learning. One parent described the communication through the online platform as 'excellent, they are always sharing what children have been doing.'

The wellbeing of staff was important to the service. Staff felt valued and told us they 'loved working here.' The team were very good at supporting each other. They recognised connecting with colleagues from the wider school community was important, and made use of their transition programme and family learning opportunities to work with colleagues and introduce families to the school community.

The service had a system in place to ensure communication between all staff was very good. This included regular team meetings with the management team, minutes being recorded and shared with all staff, weekly planning meetings to ensure children's learning was planned for through a responsive and intentional planning model, and daily discussions with the team.

Staff engaged in professional learning and development to support the nursery improvement priorities. This included recent literacy training and Solihull training. They spoke confidently about the impact this training had on their practice and experiences for children. Some staff had engaged in professional reading to further support their practice in working closely with families. This showed a commitment to improving outcomes for children and their value in working closely with families.

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

It is recommended that all children are encouraged to wash their hands after playing outside to minimise the risk of infection.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 3: Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 7 June 2017.

Action taken since then
Children were encouraged to wash their hands after playing outdoors and at key times throughout the session. We were confident this area for improvement had been 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	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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