Dunmore Nursery School
Day Care of Children

Kirkland Avenue
Ballingry
Lochgelly
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Telephone: 01592 583 693

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 January 2024

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003015943

About the service

Dunmore Nursery School is a day care of children service provided by Fife Council. They are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 70 children at any one time, aged from two to an age to attend primary school, of whom no more than 20 may be under three years of age.

The service is provided from a building within the village of Ballingry. The building consists of three playrooms, two for under threes and one for three to five year olds. Both rooms open out into separate secure outdoor play areas. There are separate entrances for the children in each age group to enter. There is a sensory room, a kitchen area and two separate welcoming entrances for children and families.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 9 January 2024 between 08:30 and 17:50 and Wednesday 10 January 2024 between 08:40 and 15:30. 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with or received responses to Microsoft forms questionnaires from 13 of their family members
- spoke with staff members and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were warm, nurturing and knew children well.
- Meaningful, supportive relationships with families were improving outcomes for children.
- Children were meaningfully involved in learning about risk as they played and becoming aware of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Children were happy, content and having their needs met by skilled staff.
- Staff leadership roles supported a shared responsibility of improving the service for children.
- Committed, compassionate leadership was improving experiences for children.
- The service should continue to develop the learning environment to ensure that there is challenge available to effectively support children's learning.

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?	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? 4 - Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing and supportive interactions from staff. Staff were kind and took time to interact with children at their level and listen to their thoughts and views. One parent told us, "The staff are so friendly, they made me feel so comfortable when transitioning my child into nursery". This showed children benefitted from a friendly staff team that valued children and families.

Personal plans were in place for all children. These included children's likes, dislikes and specific care needs. Staff spoke confidently about strategies in place to support individual children. They used this information in practice, to ensure that children received care that was tailored to their individual needs. Staff linked closely with other professionals such as speech and language therapists or health visitors to ensure that children received the right support. Some personal plans had not been updated every six months. We encouraged the service to ensure that all plans were updated regularly. This would further ensure that children continue to receive individualised care and support.

Cosy, relaxing spaces were available for children to rest in all of the playrooms. For example, a quiet sensory room was available and small beds and pillows were available to children. Some parents told us, they were unsure if their child had access to areas to rest, sleep or relax. We suggested the service further develop this by offering more spaces and opportunities to allow children to rest or sleep throughout the session. This would further support children's emotional wellbeing.

Mealtimes were social, unhurried and relaxed experiences for children. Children chose when they wanted to eat in all of the rooms. This meant that other children were able to experience uninterrupted play. Staff listened to and responded to children's needs and wishes at mealtimes very well. Staff mostly sat with children and spoke with them to ensure this was a positive social experience. Children's allergies were well considered and appropriate procedures had been put in place to ensure children were safe at mealtimes.

Appropriate policies and procedures were in place to ensure the safe administration and storage of medication. Staff knew children's individual medical needs very well and there was appropriate information stored to ensure these needs were met. We asked the service to ensure that all of these forms are reviewed every three months or every term. This would further ensure that children's medical needs are met.

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

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children experienced free flow play throughout the session. They confidently chose where they would like to play and moved freely throughout the spaces. This told us that children felt confident and secure in their environment.

Children spoke about enjoying playing with their friends outside and they were able to follow their play ideas as they explored their environment. The service supported children to have free-flowing play between the indoor and outdoor spaces. This ensured children were able to lead their play and benefit from extended periods outdoors.

There were a range of resources and experiences that were available to children throughout the sessions. We found that some areas in the setting should be revisited to ensure there is enough challenge and interesting resources for children. One parent told us, "The setting and play equipment looks tired and can be doing with upgrading". We shared this with the leadership who had plans to update some resources and further develop some areas of the nursery to ensure they all reflect the same high-quality opportunities throughout.

There were many opportunities throughout the environment which supported children's developing curiosity and problem solving. For example, children benefitted from a variety of natural, open-ended resources in some of the spaces. One parent told us, "They liked the open-ended play activities within the setting". This supported children's developing creativity and problem solving.

Staff knew children very well as individuals. Children's progress was monitored closely to ensure that appropriate strategies and supports were in place. Staff used a range of tools to gather information about children's progress. As a result, children were supported to reach their full potential.

Children had individual journals where their learning was documented using a range of media. For example, staff had recently linked their journals to QR codes that families could scan to see video observations of their children. This allowed children's learning to come to life and be meaningfully shared with families.

Interactions with children were responsive as staff actively listened to children and supported their learning. The current planning did not always reflect children's interests and curiosities. We suggested the service review their approach to planning to ensure it is responsive and reflects children's interest. This would further support children to reach their full potential.

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The entrance area where parents and children first came was warm, welcoming and gave a strong message to children and families, that they mattered. There were meaningful displays which shared information with parents and spaces for parents and staff to speak. One parent told us, "The nursery always takes the time to speak with me". Most parents told us they felt welcomed into the service and that they had many opportunities to speak with staff.

Staff's risk assessing was proactive at identifying risks and minimising potential harm to children. Children were meaningfully involved in developing risk assessments for all areas. They had been meaningfully consulted on how to keep themselves safe and their words and thoughts recorded. This enabled children to take part in risky play in a safe and responsible way.

The service had led a project linked to the Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act (SIMOA) campaign from the Care Inspectorate to ensure children were safe when out in the community or in the local woods. They brought "SIMOA" the elephant with them to highlight any areas that may not be safe to children. Children spoke confidently about SIMOA the elephant and what they did to keep us safe. This information was shared with families and displayed in the entrance. This supported children to have a deeper understanding of how to stay safe when in the local community.

Infection prevention and control practices were embedded within the service. Children and staff were seen regularly washing their hands, in line with good practice. The majority of children were familiar with routines and staff took an active role at supporting children to ensure they were safe and healthy too. This minimised the potential for any spread of infections.

The layout of the playrooms had been given careful consideration to support children's needs as the service had expanded. For example, staff had developed a small sensory room for children to use off the busier 3-5 room. Staff worked with children to identify how spaces would best be used. They consulted them and displayed their thoughts on a display. Some areas had been developed in a way to allow children space to move freely. While other areas were crowded with furniture. We encouraged the service to continue to develop spaces to ensure children are able to move freely from one area to another. This would further support children to lead their own learning.

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 quality indicator 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 valued them as partners. Management and staff promoted a shared vision for the setting that provided a safe, caring, supportive learning environment that put children at the heart. This ensured positive outcomes for children. One staff member said, "Dunmore Nursery is an extremely nurturing environment where children and families are at the heart of everything we do".

The leadership team led through a compassionate, kind and supportive approach. Staff told us that they felt well supported in their role by the leaders in the service. The team shared opportunities to take on leadership roles. One staff member told us, "Distributive leadership is encouraged where everyone takes on a role in developing the nursery". This meant that children benefitted from a team that was committed to improvement.

Robust quality assurance and self evaluation had been embedded to monitor and reflect on practice. For example, monitoring the quality of journals and staff supervision. We suggested the service extend on areas of quality assurance to include aspects such as introducing accident/incident and medicine audits. This would further ensure sustained high-quality care.

The current improvement plan was targeted and focused on outcomes for children. This was shared with children and families in the main entrance. One priority was to improve digital literacy. It was evident that aspects of this priority had been actioned and were leading to improved outcomes for children. This meant children benefitted from a setting that continues to improve.

Parent's views were sought through questionnaires and informal feedback. Some parents told us that communication between the service could be improved. One parent said they would like better communication at pick up times and hand overs at the end of the session. We shared this with the service and encouraged them to further develop how they gather and share feedback from families.

We could see some evidence of where feedback from parents and children had informed changes in the setting. For example, the recent change of areas in the 3-5 room was completed through consultation with children. We encouraged the service to build on this practice to ensure that children and families are meaningfully involved in evaluating and improving the service. This would further ensure shared, sustained improvement in the service.

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children benefited from a passionate and caring staff team. Positive relationships had been developed and maintained between most families and staff. One parent told us, "The staff are so friendly... they come up with different ideas to entertain the kids and the encouragement they have towards the children is amazing". As a result, staff knew families and children well.

Staff had clear roles and responsibilities. They had identified leadership roles within the improvement plan of the service. They were keen to lead improvement and discussed confidently the impact of changes that had been made. For example, one staff member had recently improved how the setting uses digital technology to support children's learning.

Regular team meetings and staff training opportunities helped staff to reflect on their practice, learning and development. Staff spoke confidently about the training they had accessed or planned to access. They linked training to improving outcomes for children and families. Staff told us they felt valued and supported by management and the wider team. This positive and supportive ethos meant that children experienced loving and nurturing care from all staff.

Transitions were carefully planned and tailored to children's individual needs. Home visits were offered by nursery staff to help to build relationships and get to know children in advance of starting nursery. This ensured relationships were developed with key workers before moving into nursery. Parents were included, valued, informed and supported to manage the transition process. This meant children experienced continuity of care and positive transitions.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed throughout the full day. Staff breaks were planned in a way that minimised the impact on children, while allowing staff to rest and be refreshed. Staffing levels allowed for staff to support children's individual needs where required. Mostly effective staff deployment meant staff were supporting nurturing experiences and were able to meet all children's individual needs well.

A good mixture of skills, knowledge and experience in the staff team contributed to positive interactions and play and learning experiences for children. Staff told us they felt well supported by the management team and had regular opportunities to discuss professional reading and policies. We found that the induction procedures could be improved to support new and temporary staff in their roles. For example, by ensuring that staff have a mentor when they start in the service. This would promote a robust induction that ensure a shared, consistent approach.

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	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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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