Strathdearn Primary Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Strathdearn Primary School
Tomatin
Inverness
IV13 7YN

Telephone: 01463 226 197

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 February 2023

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003015982

About the service

Strathdearn Primary Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children up to attending primary school at any one time. The service is provided by Highland council and operates in term time only.

The nursery is provided in a purpose built room within Strathdearn Primary School. Children have access to an open plan playroom, with cloakroom area and toilet facilities incorporated in to the room. They can access the garden area directly from the playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 February 2023. Feedback was given on 16 February 2023. 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 and three of their families;
- spoke with five staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Children received warm and nurturing care from the staff team who knew them well. This supported children to feel respected and valued.
• Children enjoyed free flow play between inside and outside which supported their overall wellbeing.
• Children experienced a calm and welcoming environment.
• The manager and staff team welcomed parental input, which made parents and families feel included in the life of the nursery.
• Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff who were committed to their role.

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from very nurturing care and support from the staff team who knew them well. We saw interactions to be warm and supportive. Staff welcomed children when they arrived at the setting, supporting them to settle with sensitivity. As a result, children felt safe and secure.

Very effective personal planning was in place to ensure children's needs were met. Parents and families regularly shared personal information which allowed staff to tailor care to meet children's needs. Relevant information was clearly recorded and shared between the staff team. Staff made time to meet with families to discuss significant changes to children's needs. This meant that children received the care and support that was right for them.

Staff were proactive about seeking support from, and working with, other professionals, such as Occupational Health, Speech and Language and other early years specialists. Effective strategies had been put in place, and were being used, to support a number of children attending the setting. As a result, children were being supported to reach their potential.

Mealtimes were relaxed and calm. Children had opportunities to develop their independence skills such as cutting, spreading, and pouring. One child told inspectors "I have made my own sandwich!". Staff were aware of the importance of routines such as mealtimes in developing close attachments with children and sat with children during lunch. This meant that children enjoyed a positive, social experience.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were engaged and having fun in their play. Some children were mark making in paint and in sand, while others were working together to complete puzzles. Staff interactions supported children to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, staff repeated key words such as colour during play and encouraged children to count as they set out cups for snack. As a result, children were developing a range of lifelong skills.

Children were able to free flow between inside and outside. Although the garden space was small, children enjoyed a variety of experiences, such as planting bulbs, riding on bikes, and playing in a small house. One child showed inspectors how they could 'light the fire' in the pretend fireplace. There were some loose parts available to children to support them to develop their curiosity, imagination and problem-solving skills. As a result, children were experiencing joy and developing their confidence.

Staff were developing a balance of responsive and spontaneous planning which supported children to follow their interests and lead their own play. Observations of children's development and learning were recorded in their learning journals, with next steps identified where appropriate. Staff regularly shared this information with parents, with the journals going home, face to face discussions in the service and during stay and play sessions. Parents told us they felt they were included in their child's learning and enjoyed seeing how they were progressing. Children's achievements were celebrated, and their experiences were shared. Children showed us their learning journals, recalling their learning and telling us about their nursery friends. This meant that children were being empowered to be fully involved in their own play and learning.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

Children benefitted from a calm and welcoming environment. Resources were attractively displayed and easily accessible to children within the playroom and the garden. Children had access to a cosy area within the playroom that was covered and furnished with cushions. This gave them the message that they were valued, and that their needs mattered.

Resources reflected children's current interest throughout the setting. For example, books linked to firefighters, role play, mark making using rescue vehicles and pretend fires to be extinguished. This supported children to develop their curiosity and imagination. There were some loose parts and real-life items available to further extend children's skills in thinking and understanding. We discussed with the manager continuing to expand these, both inside and outside.

Staff supported children to identify and manage risks within their environment, such as undertaking health and safety checks before accessing the outdoor space. One child told inspectors they were "making sure it was safe to go out" as they took a visual checklist outside with a member of staff. Children were being supported to be responsible and to stay safe as a result.

Storage of children and families' personal information complied with best practice. Confidential information was stored securely within the playroom but readily accessible to staff. This meant that they had access to the relevant information to support them to meet children's needs.

Following inspection, we discussed the location of the toilets in the playroom with the manager. The current arrangements do not meet with best practice guidance and pose a potential risk for the spread of infection. We have made an area for improvement around this and have asked the provider to carry our remedial works to safely enclose the facilities. They have told us the necessary works will be completed by August 2023. We signposted the manager to "Space to Grow" which gives further guidance (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure that toilet facilities follow best practice guidance. This should include, but is not limited to, enclosing the current facilities and adding a door to the entrance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My environment is secure and safe.' (HSCS 5.17).

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where major strengths supported positive outcomes for children. There were very few areas for improvement.

A shared vision across the nursery and school created a happy and inclusive ethos. This promoted a happy atmosphere for children to play and learn. The headteacher invited new families into the school to share and discuss the setting's visions and aims. This gave them the opportunity to feel meaningfully involved, and to understand what they could expect for their children. Parents we spoke to told us they felt very involved in the life of the setting. This meant they felt valued and respected.

Quality assurance processes were very effective . A clear and detailed improvement plan was in place for the setting. Staff were able to tell us their role in supporting improvement, such as their role in supporting children to develop their early literacy skills. For example, they ensured all children had opportunities to develop both gross and fine motor skills which would help them to develop these skills. Parents had recently been invited in for a visit with a focus on early literacy. One parent told us "The recent visit allowed us to see the opportunities the children have and how well they access them."

Strong leadership supported staff to develop their confidence and skills within their roles. Regular staff meetings supported staff to reflect together and self-evaluate the quality of care and support provided. There was a strong focus on improving outcomes for all children and their families, using relevant evidence and best practice guidance. As a result, children and families benefited from a culture of continuous improvement.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where major strengths supported positive outcomes for children. There were very few areas for improvement.

Children and families benefitted from the consistency of a caring and nurturing staff team who were motivated and enthusiastic. Staff knew children well and had developed relationships with families, delivering a consistent approach in responding to their individual needs. Parents told us staff were always warm and welcoming. Staff worked well together, and collaboratively with families, to promote high quality outcomes for children. For example, discreetly discussing children's changing needs with each other to establish how best to support them. As a result of this, children experienced continuity and consistency in their care.

Very effective staff deployment ensured children's needs were being met. The staff team shared tasks throughout the day and deployed themselves where they would be best placed to meet children's needs. They communicated clearly with each other when leaving areas or taking children to other parts of the setting for personal care. As a result, children were effectively and safely supervised.

Clear processes for mentoring and supporting newer and less experienced staff were in place. More experienced staff actively supported them to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Staff told us they felt very well supported by their manager and colleagues, and that they felt their views and opinions mattered. Staff absences were very well managed to minimise any disruptions to children . This meant that children received high quality care that was stable, from staff who knew them 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	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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