Fairlie Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

c/o Fairlie Primary School
1 Morton Way
Fairlie
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Telephone: 01475 568 441

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 October 2023

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Fairlie Primary School Nursery Class operates out of Fairlie Primary School in the village of Fairlie, North Ayrshire. The service is provided by North Ayrshire Council and offers early education and childcare for up to 24 children aged three years, to those not yet attending primary school at any one time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 and 11 October 2023 between the hours of 10:00 and 17:00. 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 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 some children using the service and received completed questionnaires from 11 of their families
- Spoke with eight staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Children experienced warm, kind and nurturing care. All children were happy, settled and having fun.

• Staff knew children and families' individual needs and preferences very well. Staff understood the importance of forming positive relationships with families, and saw this as a key strength of the service.

• Children enjoyed free flow play between indoors and outdoors and were confident in leading their own play. Play and learning experiences could be enhanced through the introduction of more real and open ended resources indoors.

• The development of self-evaluation processes and a robust auditing and monitoring system would support the whole staff to to develop a robust quality assurance process.

• Staff worked very well together as a team. There was a strong ethos of communication and collaboration. This supported positive outcomes for children and families.

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?	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? 5 - Very Good

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced warm, nurturing care and it was evident that staff knew children's individual needs and preferences very well. Children felt valued and included, they confidently approached staff for cuddles and to share their thoughts and achievements. Staff interactions were kind, positive and responsive, promoting an inclusive and respectful ethos in the service. The importance of family relationships and children's well-being in the service was clear. Staff spoke with children meaningfully about their home life, and supported children to make choices through a respectful rights-based approach. As a result, children were happy, relaxed and comfortable with all staff.

Children benefitted from unhurried and well organised mealtimes. Food menus were nutritious and children had independent access to fresh drinking water at all times, promoting health and hydration. Staff used mealtimes as an opportunity to have meaningful conversations with children. Children enjoyed chatting about their home life, prompted by a family wall in the lunchroom which displayed pictures of children with their families. This supported children to feel safe, valued and develop secure attachments with staff. Some children were provided with more opportunities to develop independence than others. We discussed ensuring a consistent approach to self-service and clearing plates to support all children to develop life-long skills.

Children's health and wellbeing was very well supported by good use of personal planning. Personal plans were regularly updated in consultation with parents, and all children's targets were shared with all staff. This ensured consistency of care and a shared approach to supporting children to achieve their targets. The strategies required to achieve children's targets were not clearly detailed in all children's personal plans, we discussed the importance of monitoring in 3.1. Children requiring additional support had clear strategies in place, and all staff demonstrated a very good understanding of these in practice. This meant that children's well-being, development and health needs were consistently supported. Most parents strongly agreed that they were fully involved in their child's learning and development. One parent told us, 'I think the staff are approachable and get to know the children very well, they work to make care personal to the children.'

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through clear systems and processes. Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Children's health and medical information was current, regularly reviewed and all staff were well informed of children's health and medical needs. We asked that the service review the information they gathered when accepting short term medication to ensure it is in line with current guidance, 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services.' T his would further support staff in ensuring all required information is clearly recorded for short term medication.

1.3 Play and learning.

Children were joyful and engaged in play and learning experiences throughout our visit. We observed children choosing to spend long periods of time in one area, leading their own play and self-selecting resources. This provided children with plenty of opportunities to capture their imagination and enrich their

learning. Children had opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills within the indoor and outdoor environment. During our visit, we observed children measuring and mixing, mark making with various materials, matching and sorting. Children also enjoyed choosing books and approaching staff for a cuddle and a story. Some of the books and play experiences available were linked to a Halloween theme. It was evident that the Halloween theme had come through the children's interests and was detailed clearly in their planning.

Children were empowered to be meaningfully and actively involved in planning their play experiences. Planning approaches were very responsive and play spaces clearly reflected children's current interests. Children's voices were consistently evident throughout floor books, wall displays and in the children's own 'special books'. As a result, children were valued and had ownership of their learning. Children's learning and achievements were shared via 'Twitter', face to face conversations, and open access to children's 'special books.' Two parents told us that they would like to receive more information about their child's day through online programmes. The management team were already aware of these views and spoke about plans to develop different ways to share information with parents. This will ensure that all parents feel fully involved in their child's day.

Skilful staff interactions supported children to extend their learning through using effective commentary and open-ended questions. Staff knew when to intervene to extend play and learning and when to make quality observations. Regular observations were recorded at the back of each planning sheet, this meant that all staff had a good understanding of every child's current targets. This ensures that all children received the right support and the right time. Clear recording of the strategies to support all children to achieve their targets would further ensure that children are supported to reach their full potential.

There were some opportunities for children to build connections with their local community, for example they had received donations to enhance play and learning experiences such as a boat, wood for campfires and a custom built mud kitchen. Children frequently accessed a large field next to the service, where parents had been invited to join some outdoor learning experiences through a working with parents calendar. Management and staff told us about their plans to include parents in children's experiences more regularly, and establish wider community links. This will help children to develop strong links with their local and wider communities and offer further play and learning opportunities.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

Children experienced a warm and welcoming environment. The playroom was bright and well furnished with plenty of natural light and ventilation. There was a large couch and comfortable area in the middle of the playroom where we observed children resting, relaxing and reading books. We suggested relocating this area to a corner or wall in order to create a quieter space with more privacy for children who may decide to sleep or wish to rest alone.

Photographs of the children and their work were displayed in all areas of the playroom. This celebrated children's successes and gave them a sense of ownership of the environment. Children were confident in leading their play and independently accessing resources which were stored at their level. Resources were well maintained and children benefitted from some natural, open-ended materials that sparked their

curiosity and creativity. This was most evident in the outdoor area. The indoor area could be further developed with the addition of more open ended and real-life resources. This would enhance children's opportunities to think imaginatively and develop problem-solving skills.

Children benefited from daily energetic play and enjoyed free flow access to a fully enclosed outdoor play space. The outdoor space was small but well-designed to maximise the play opportunities available for children. There were also regular opportunities to run and play in a large field located close to the garden. We saw that children were happy and confident outdoors, supported by staff who recognised the positive impact being outdoors had on their well-being. Almost all parents were happy with the resources and environment, one parent told us, 'The outdoor area is great and is a popular area with the children.'

All staff understood the importance of their responsibility to keep children safe. Staff identified and minimised potential hazards in the indoor and outdoor environments without impacting negatively on children's experiences. Children had previously been including in risk assessing the garden area, we would suggest re-instating methods of children identifying and managing their own risks. This would support children to develop their own risk assessment strategies, independence and resilience.

The environment was clean and well-maintained. Maintenance and repair procedures were in place and children's information was stored securely in the office. Staff had an overall good knowledge of infection prevention and control procedures, this minimised the risk of infection and ensured that children experienced a clean and safe environment.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The management team engaged well throughout the inspection process and demonstrated a clear improvement focus and commitment to promoting good outcomes for children and families. As a relatively new staff team, the early years manager told us they had been spending a large portion of their time working directly with the team to promote a culture of collaboration. The management team had supported staff individually and as a team to form strong, supportive relationships. Staff had regular opportunities to meet formally and informally with the manager to celebrate successes and identify any areas for development. The impact of this was clear in the service. The staff team were happy, motivated felt very well supported. As a result, there was a culture of collaborative practice in the staff team and staff felt confident sharing their views. Almost all parents agreed or strongly agreed that the service was well managed. One parent also told us, 'The manager is excellent. She provides superb leadership and really knows what is happening with every child.' Staff were in the early stages of developing leadership roles in communication, parental engagement, well-being and literacy. We discussed further embedding these roles to enhance experiences and outcomes for children and families.

A joint school and early years improvement plan was in place. This had been developed in line with the whole school priorities and key areas for improvement for school and early years class had been identified. The areas relevant to the early years class had been highlighted and were evident in practice. The management team had developed some methods of self-evaluation with staff and families. Parents had previously been issued with a questionnaire and had provided feedback on the service after recent parent groups. However, management and staff had not made changes as a result of feedback.

We advised the management team to develop a more robust process for self-evaluation and gathering families' feedback. This would ensure that parents' feedback has an impact on service development and influencing change. We also suggested considering ways to develop more specific improvement priorities more suited to the needs and preferences of the children, families in the early years class. These should have clear actions and areas of responsibility to support staff on their improvement journey. This would have a positive impact on the outcomes and experiences for children and families.

Some informal monitoring and auditing systems were in place which were effective in some aspects of quality assurance. The early years manager told us that due to the amount of time spent working directly with the children and staff team, there had not always been enough time to fully implement formal auditing and monitoring processes. This had led to some gaps in the recording of information and some missed opportunities for improvement. We discussed the benefits of consistent formal quality assurance procedures, this would support the management team to embed a meaningful cycle of continuous 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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment.

Staff were highly skilled in ensuring children experienced positive outcomes throughout the day. The whole staff team were proactive and communicated extremely well, respectfully supporting each other to ensure that children experienced nurturing and responsive care. Staff kept a communication diary, and part-time members of staff shared an additional communication diary to ensure that information was always shared efficiently so that children experienced consistent care. All of the staff members we spoke to during our visit highlighted communication and teamwork as one of the main strengths of the service. All parents spoke very highly of the staff team, describing them as 'fantastic, friendly, approachable, interested, kind and caring.'

The service was appropriately staffed at all times, and staff breaks had no impact on the quality of children's experiences, whilst ensuring that all staff had sufficient time to rest and return refreshed.

Children experienced continuity of care consistently throughout the day with very few changes to staffing. This ensured that children were able to form secure attachments and staff could build positive relationships with families, supporting positive transitions and good information sharing. Almost all parents felt that staff knew their children well, one parent told us, 'All the staff are friendly and happy and take the time to get to know my child.' Another parent told us, 'Staff are always approachable, caring and make time to discuss the children.' It was clear during our visit that children were very familiar and comfortable with the management team. The management team covered any planned or unplanned absences. This meant that children were always cared for by staff that knew them well, and they felt safe.

A mix of skills and knowledge was evident in the staff team. Staff could identify each other's strengths and confidently discuss how these were utilised in the staff team to support each other. The staff team were actively encouraged and supported to gain additional qualifications and develop their skills and knowledge. This mainly took place through in-house training opportunities and practice visits to cluster services. As a result, children were cared for by a staff team who were confident and skilled in their role.

The manager had a strong supportive presence in the playroom and there was a strong collaborative ethos in the service. All staff worked very well together to ensure positive experiences and outcomes for children, ensuring children and families were at the centre of their practice.

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?	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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