Tulloch Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Gillespie Place
Perth
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Telephone: 01738 472 323

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 November 2023

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003016067

About the service

Tulloch Primary School Nursery operates from a large, purpose-built classroom within Tulloch Primary School and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 66 children at any one time aged two years to those not yet attending primary school.

Nursery children are cared for in a large open plan space that has direct access through the main nursery classroom area, to an enclosed nursery garden. Children have access to a large cloakroom area, toilet facilities and a separate changing room. The service is provided by Perth and Kinross council.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 and 7 November 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 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 four of their family members
- we reviewed 15 responses to our questionnaires and spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Calm, warm, and positive interactions by staff contributed to children feeling happy, safe, and secure.

• Staff were skilled in supporting children through highly effective use of language and questioning strategies to further develop children's thinking and problem-solving skills.

• Management and staff had developed positive and meaningful relationships with children and most of their families.

• To keep children safe and healthy, some improvements were needed to ensure that effective hand washing routines were embedded in practice.

• The management team should undertake some monitoring on how staff are deployed at busier times of the day to ensure all children are receiving consistent care and support.

• Staff worked very well together and valued the positive working relationships they had formed.

• Families would benefit from being better informed of temporary staff covering unplanned absences.

• Management and staff were passionate and committed to improving outcomes.

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 evaluated this key question 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 staff that were nurturing, friendly and caring and knew children well as individuals. Staff provided very good levels of engagement and interactions were warm and fun as they laughed and chatted with children as they played. Staff were skilled at waiting to be invited into children's play and used children's cues to provide them with the right support at the right time. They gave praise, encouragement and reassurance when needed which supported children's wellbeing and resulted in children being settled and enjoying their time at nursery.

Staff had built positive working relationships with families and other professionals to provide consistent care for children who required additional support. Strategies were in place to ensure their needs were met in a respectful way which supported them to be included in nursery experiences.

Some children's personal plans did not reflect their current interests and needs as this information had not been updated for some time. This meant some plans did not reflect children's and families current, preferences. However, staff knew all children very well and were responsive to their needs. The service was working with families to ensure key information was updated and understood the importance of keeping this information up to date to enable them to provide continuity and consistently of care.

Most children and their families benefitted from a designated key worker. They told us of the positive relationships they had formed with their child's key worker and were confident their children's needs were being met. However, due to staffing absences and recruitment challenges within the service, some children were yet to be given a key worker. This resulted in some families not always being provided with meaningful information or receiving regular updates on their child's progress and development. The management team were confident this would improve following staff vacancies being recently filled which would provide all children with a key worker.

Children benefitted from their families being invited warmly welcomed back into the service. They were enabled to support their children to settle in and participate in stay and play sessions. In addition, they could and could pop in for a' chat, coffee and cake catch up'. Meaningful relationships had been formed with most families who told us they felt included in the nursery community. This holistic approach resulted in children that were happy and learning, and most families felt valued and included.

Children's rights were respected as personal care routines were carried out using warm and caring interactions. For example, we observed staff sensitively talking a child through their intimate care routine. Younger children were enabled to sleep throughout the nursery day based on their individual needs. Staff supported children to sleep and rest in a calmer, quieter area of the nursery and supervised them while they slept. These approaches contributed to children feeling safe and secure.

Most children experienced a relaxed, sociable mealtime where they could eat at a pace which was right for them. We saw they enjoyed finding a place to sit and chatted happily to their peers which provided opportunities to promote close attachments and further develop language skills. They were supported to

become independent and learn new skills during their mealtime experiences. We saw they independently chose food from their packed lunch boxes or confidently used tongs to self-serve from dishes. They collected their own cutlery, poured their drinks, and cleared away their dishes when they had finished their meal. Overall, mealtimes provided children with a positive learning experience.

1.3 Play and learning

Good quality play experiences engaged most children in their play. Older children benefitted form a good balance of planned and responsive planning which enabled them to lead their own play and learning. For example, children had developed an interest in making potions from a familiar storybook. Staff responded to this by providing safe and interesting materials for mixing. Children told us, 'Look at the colour of this,' and 'We are mixing all these things together to make a potion.'

Younger children had a designated area which provided them with free flow into the nursery playroom. Most younger children were confident in engaging with the sensory opportunities and more challenging play provided within the main playroom. However, there was no planning in place for younger children which meant there was limited opportunities to be curious and wonder through real life experiences and schematic play. Staff told us they were being supported by the local authority to plan for this age group.

Children's skills in language, literacy, and numeracy were supported very well. There was a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their emergent writing and number skills. For example, large scales were available for children to weigh and measure interesting loose parts. We heard children confidently talking about numbers and counting together. Staff spontaneously sang with children and reference books were in areas of play in response to children's current interests. We found these early emergent skills were naturally woven into conversations and activities and engaged children in their learning.

Children benefited from staff who were skilled in supporting them through highly effective use of language and questioning strategies. These interactions enabled children to think, problem solve independently, and supported children to feel listened to and valued.

Observations of children's progress and development were shared with families and tracked through an online digital platform. We found that they varied in quality and consistency. For some families, they were descriptions of group activities and individual focused observations were limited. Next steps in development were in place for most children which were age and stage appropriate, and achievable.

Floor books demonstrated that children were listened to, and their ideas and opinions mattered. However, they did not yet evidence depth and progression in learning and support children to achieve their full potential. The service had identified this as part of their ongoing improvement work.

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.

2.2 Children receive high quality facilities

Children experienced a spacious, bright, and well-ventilated playroom. The open plan playroom was furnished with natural décor which helped to create a calm and relaxing environment. There were some homely and comfortable spaces which enabled children to have spaces to rest and relax. Children made

good use of the space available and played together cooperatively in groups. This helped them to build positive relationships with their peers and develop their social skills.

Children experienced spaces which promoted creativity, imagination, and fun. A good provision of natural materials and loose parts both indoors and outdoors provided them with opportunities to be curious and imaginative. Their environments were laid out in a way which helped develop children's independence. Resources easily accessible which enabled children to self-select and make their own choices. Children would benefit from real life experiences being enhanced in some play areas, for example, the home corner to further enrich their play.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported as they had free flow access to the outdoors for fresh air and exercise. A large garden provided opportunities for children to dig in soil, run, pedal on bikes, and climb on larger loose parts which contributed to the development of their coordination and larger motor skills. The service was working on resourcing their outdoor area again after some resources had been damaged during the holidays.

Children experienced an environment that was clean which supported their wellbeing. Staff undertook regular cleaning throughout the day which helped support cleanliness. Staff and children washed their hands when coming in from the garden and before eating which minimised the spread of infection. However, there were a few occasions when opportunities to wash hands were missed. For example, a child did not wash their hands after using the toilet, and children lifted the lid of the bin in the playroom and returned to play without washing their hands. To minimise the spread of infection the management team should undertake some quality assurance to ensure robust hand washing routines are embedded in practice (see area for improvement 1).

Staff had developed effective systems to keep children safe. They had a good understanding of our SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) keeping children safe campaign and how this supported them to ensure children were always accounted for. Staff were allocated areas of play and communicated well with each other regarding numbers of children and in which area they had chosen to play in. We heard children counting with staff before moving into the school dinner hall to ensure all children were present. Head counts of children were undertaken on a regular basis throughout the day which contributed to keeping them safe and secure.

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and healthy, the management team should undertake some quality assurance around hand washing routines to ensure children experience a secure and safe environment. This should include but is not limited to ensuring effective hand washing routines are in place.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Children benefitted from a staff team service who placed value on the opinions of children and their families. The vision, values and aims of the service had been developed through consultation with children, which meant they represented the care and provision they provided. This contributed to the positive ethos of the setting.

Staff were committed to their shared vision of supporting improvement within the service and achieving the nursey's improvement targets. Planning for improvement reflected current priorities in the setting and staff had a good understanding of their role in improving outcomes. Staff confidently told us how children's rights were being embedded into daily practice and how improvements planned for outdoor learning would benefit children.

Children and their families had some involvement in influencing positive change within the service. A 'You said, we did' display informed families of how their suggestions had been implemented. For example, families had suggested siblings attending the school be invited to nursery play and stay sessions. The management team told us, they would continue to develop self-evaluation processes through a newly formed group of families called Tulloch Tots. We discussed ways in which this group could contribute positively to continuous improvement within the service and support families to feel valued and listened too.

Leaders were very well organised and had developed good quality assurance systems. For example, monthly monitoring of staff practice and the environment provided staff with constructive feedback which supported them to reflect on and improve their daily practice. We saw that monitoring had identified improvements as highlighted within this report, for example floor books and children's observations. Leaders now require time to promote and implement changes to measure if improvements made had impacted positively and improved outcomes.

Staff's self-esteem and confidence was enhanced through leadership roles in developing specific areas within the nursery. These included: Makaton, communication champion, outdoor learning, and wellbeing champion. They confidently told us of positive changes these roles had made in providing better outcomes for children. Staff asked us questions about their roles which demonstrated a commitment to providing positive experiences to help children reach their full potential.

The management team and staff were honest about the challenges they had been experiencing. They were responsive to our suggestions and had started to implement improvements before the inspection had been concluded. This demonstrated a commitment to their ongoing improvement work.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment.

Staff worked well together to create a welcoming environment for children. They felt fully supported by the management team and valued the positive working relationships that had been built within their team. They communicated in a respectful way and spoke with enthusiasm and passion about their roles which demonstrated positivity and commitment to their work.

Staff had a good mix of skills, and experience to meet children's needs. They told us of training they had attended and were knowledgeable on best practice guidance and how they used this to provide good outcomes for children. As a result, children were happy and confident in their environment.

Staffing levels met with minimum requirements; however, they were not always sufficient to meet the needs of all children. On the first day of our visit, staff breaks at lunchtime could have been planned better to ensure minimal disruption to children's routines. For example, staff supporting younger children and those children requiring extra support at lunchtime, became task orientated which meant children were left sitting on their own for periods of time. Following some feedback at the end of our first day, improvements were made. The atmosphere was calmer, staff sat at tables with the children and engaged them in meaningful conversation which contributed positively to attachments and provided a more homely and sociable mealtime experience.

Some older children experienced long periods of waiting during their transition from play to lunch. During these busier times of the day, staff deployment had not been fully considered. For example, a few children became restless and disengaged which meant their needs were not being fully met at this time. The management team should undertake some monitoring of staff deployment during lunchtime to support smoother transitions for all children.

Children were happy to see familiar temporary staff covering some of the unplanned absences. We observed them to be met at the nursery door by excited children. Their joyful interactions told us some temporary staff knew children well. However, some families felt there was a high turnover of staff. Parents comments included, 'There are so many staff, I don't know them all'; 'There is a high turnover of staff so it is unclear if there is continuation of the level of care and play they got before' and ' I know there has been a few leavers and I am not sure if staff have been replaced, I haven't been informed of new staff so it's like they are always short staffed'. We shared these comments with the management team to highlight that more effective communication was needed. This would support families to be more informed about who was caring for their children in the absence of key staff.

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

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