Kirkmichael Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Kirkmichael
Blairgowrie
PH10 7NX

Telephone: 01250 871 929

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 September 2023

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003016074

About the service

Kirkmichael Primary School Nursery is registered to provide care to a maximum of 20 children aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service operates from an annex building within the grounds of Kirkmichael Primary School. Children are cared for in a large playroom with access to outdoors and toileting facilities. The nursery is close to local amenities within the small village.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 6 September 2023 between 09:30 and 16:00. 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, 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 via an online questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing supporting their wellbeing, play and learning.
- Children's personal plan information should be further developed to ensure all relevant information is recorded.
- Children experienced a warm and welcoming environment to support their well-being. There is further scope for the service to create a homely setting to enhance children's experiences.
- Children were engaged in their play experiences which supported their curiosity, enquiry, and creativity.
- The management team had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families and should continue on their journey of improvement to develop high quality play and learning.
- Children experienced a positive ethos as staff were respectful and supportive of each other.

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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy, settled and having fun. They experienced warm, nurturing care to support their well-being. Staff were kind and respectful towards children, taking time to listen and respond. Staff knew children well and interacted positively with them to support their needs. This contributed positively to children's self-esteem and sense of well-being, as a result they were confident in approaching staff for help or reassurance. Parents highlighted this is a strength they told us, 'The care and play has significantly improved this term; [teacher] considers every child's needs and interests'.

Children's individual wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning. Staff knew children and spoke knowledgably about children's differing needs. Overall Information recorded in children's personal plans reflected the care and support staff provided which contributed to continuity and consistency in care. We noted information had not always been updated to reflect children's ongoing needs. This had the potential for information to not be effectively shared between staff resulting in children's needs not being consistently met.

Children experienced calm and sociable mealtimes. There were some opportunities for independence and choice. Staff recognised the opportunity to build on relationships and joined children at lunch time which promoted meaningful conversations. This contributed to the sociable experience for children and allowed an opportunity for emerging language skills to be developed. There were some missed opportunities for choice and independence at snack time. The service should now develop this time of day to promote children's choice and self help skills.

Partnership working with families had been well established. Staff recognised the importance of engaging with children and their families at the earliest possible stage implementing a transition program with the local toddler group. Ongoing opportunities such as 'book bug' and 'PEEP' sessions provided meaningful experiences for families to engage in. This contributed to supporting the holistic needs of each child and their family to improve their wellbeing.

1.3 Play and learning

Children's play and learning was supported well during the inspection. Staff were responsive to children's requests in their play and intervened at appropriate times. This contributed to children feeling valued and having the ability to lead their own learning by following their interests. Some staff used effective questioning to extend and develop children's individual learning. This supported children to be independent and confident in their play and learning.

Play experiences were in place to support children to develop skills in language, literacy and numeracy. This included mark-making, sorting and matching. Staff were available to children for storytelling and discussions. This supported children's enjoyment of literacy and the development of their talking and listening skills. Staff's natural interactions supported children's language and numeracy development. For example, staff got down to children's level when talking with them, and used everyday experiences to explore counting.

Staff were playful in their interactions with children and there was lots of chatter and laughter, they took time to listen to children and used some effective questioning to promote children's curiosity and creativity. Staff knew the children's interests which meant they were able to make relevant changes to the environment to support children's play. This contributed to children feeling valued and respected within the setting.

Due to significant staff changes, floorbooks and planning approaches were in the early stages of implementation for the term. The service had prioritised supporting children to transition into the setting, form attachments and become familiar with new routines. As a result, children were happy, settled and engaged in play experiences.

For the majority of the time children benefitted from uninterrupted play allowing them to become absorbed and have fun. This increased their happiness and engagement levels. However, on occasion children's choice in their play was restricted. At times children's play and learning was interrupted. This was particularly evident during times of transitions, for example, before lunchtime. This significantly reduced children's engagement levels. To limit interruptions to children's play experiences we asked the management team to review some of the arrangements in place.

Children's play and learning was enhanced through strong connections to the wider community. Regular use of the local community garden and community hall provided further opportunities for children to play and learn. This meant they had fun within their community and established links with the community. Parents comments included, 'The nursery is a fantastic resource for the area, it gives a fantastic induction into school life which sets the kids up for going into primary 1. They get to explore the surrounding areas and really get into nature which for me is such an important skill to learn'.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The premises offered a calm, warm and welcoming environment. It was clean, tidy and a well-maintained space that had plenty of natural light for children to play and learn. However, the playroom lacked homely touches and lack of cosy space for children to rest and relax in. This had potential to impact on children's emotional wellbeing.

Children were engaged in their play on the day of inspection. Play opportunities supported children's curiosity, enquiry, and creativity. Children freely accessed age-appropriate toys and resources to extend their play. Opportunities for creative craft experiences were part of core provision within the nursery supporting children to make choices in their play. This contributed to them developing a sense of ownership and respect for their environment.

Health and well-being was promoted through outdoor play experiences. The garden provided a range of spaces for development of physical skills and exploration in the equipped mud kitchen. The setting was secure, with a clear perimeter fence. This meant that children were safe as the played outdoors.

Children were supported to be healthy and safe through effective infection, prevention and control practices. The environment was well ventilated, hand washing was embedded in practice and regular cleaning took place. Staff were being respectful and protecting children by maintaining a clean and hygienic environment.

Risk assessments were in place and had been reviewed to support a safe environment for children. Arrangements were in place for maintenance and repairs within the service. As a result, children were kept safe.

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 key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The headteacher was aspirational in their approach to ensuring the service was meeting the needs of children, families, and the community. There was as strong ethos of improvement to support high quality outcomes for children and families. Staff, families, and children had been involved in creating a shared visons for the setting. This supported effective partnership working where all stakeholders' views and contributions were valued and listened to. Comments from parents include, 'Excellent culture set by and leadership from the headteacher'.

The management team had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families. Self-evaluation processes had allowed staff to reflect on their practice and identify areas for improvement. Effective quality assurance processes allowed focussed and meaningful opportunities for the management team to review and monitor various aspects of the service. The improvement plan had identified priorities for development with clear actions on how these would be achieved. The service had amended the priorities for improvement due to the significant change in staffing. This meant that the improvements were relevant and supported improving outcomes for children and their families. Continued implementation of effective quality assurance processes will support the service with continuous improvement.

Parental engagement was a real strength of the service and promoted effective partnership working. The service had involved parents in evaluating the nursery provision by asking relevant questions to seek their views and opinions and using these to inform practice. This resulted in parents feeling valued and listened to. This was enhanced by regular communication with families through a variety of methods, including email and face to face discussions. There were regular opportunities for parents to come into the nursery to support children's play and learning experiences. This helped to promote a shared partnership in the delivery of high-quality care for children.

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 key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Children were cared for by staff who were warm, kind and nurturing. Staff provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play experiences. This resulted in children who felt respected within the service. Parents were very complimentary of the staff team, comments included, '[Staff are] excellent, encouraging, enthusiastic'.

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that the right number of staff were meeting children's individual needs, consistently throughout the session. Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision and quality engagement with children. As a result, children benefitted from a very calm and positive experience.

Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. This created a positive environment for children and families. Their differing skills, knowledge and experience complimented one another and resulted in quality experiences for children. They communicated well with each other and in a respectful manner to ensure children's needs were met consistently across the session. Staff communicated well and this contributed to children being respected and created a positive team ethos within the service.

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?	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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