Greenrigg Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Polkemmet Road
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Telephone: 01501 751 334

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003016171

About the service

Greenrigg Primary School Nursery is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to 32 children aged three years to entry into primary school.

The service is provided by West Lothian Council and offers funded early learning and childcare to eligible children.

Situated in Greenrigg, it is housed within Greenrigg Primary School within secure grounds. The accommodation consists of a playroom, toilets, and a separate changing area for personal care. It has a small, fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play. Local bus routes service the area and on-street parking is available.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on Wednesday 20 September 2023 from 09:00 to 17:15. We gave feedback via Microsoft Teams on Monday 25 September 2023 to the senior leadership team and a member from the local authority. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. This inspection took place as a response to two serious incidents which we were notified about. As part of our inspection, we assessed the issues that led to the incidents and the actions taken by the service since.

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 received digital feedback from five families
- spoke with staff and the senior leadership team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Children were cared for with compassion and warmth by familiar adults who understood their needs and were committed to meeting them.

• A rich and stimulating environment offered children space to explore, discover and experiment at their own pace, within a calm home from home setting.

• Strong leadership and robust quality assurance processes promoted a culture of continuous improvement.

• Following two serious incidents where children left the building unattended, the service had taken further action to ensure the safety of all children using the service.

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, when taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children had developed positive bonds across the setting. Most staff interacted with warmth and kindness and were responsive to children needs, making them feel loved, nurtured and heard. Families told us they felt the service had created a 'home from home' environment. One told us:

"The nursery has supported us as a family very well. They make a great effort to know my child and what works for them. The nursery is very welcoming, and the staff are very supportive and approachable. My child loves attending nursery and on pickup always wants to stay".

It was clear that the development of relationships was a key ambition of the setting, and this was reflected through their values. Staff referred to their 'Greenrigg family' as they described initiatives, giving a strong sense of belonging. Staff mostly responded to cues from children where they needed comfort or support, making them feel safe and valued. They encouraged and praised children which gave them a sense of pride. They checked in on them regularly, for example, ensuring children were warm enough when outside. Most staff were able to talk about children confidently and knew what was going on in their lives, resulting in children feeling well supported and secure with predictable routines.

A wellbeing culture and values were being weaved through planning and into practice. An example of this was the organised transition programme taking place throughout the year. This meant children were being well prepared for changes and were building confidence and familiarity for transitions. The 'Jigsaw' programme was an area of pride and staff could talk about the positive impact they felt it was having, for example children were able to talk about their feelings and were learning how to manage them. Floor books evidenced the approach, showing clear links between planning and assessment. Staff should now make these floor books more accessible to children to enable them to reflect on their learning and feel a sense of pride in what they have achieved.

Some interactions were inconsistent and meant there were missed opportunities for some staff to engage in a developmentally appropriate way with some children. For example, those children who may be pre-verbal require staff to be flexible and knowledgeable in their approach. Further support and training had been identified by the senior leadership team to address this.

Meals and snacks were largely positive experiences with some children beginning to develop independence through self-serving. They were mostly relaxed and sociable experiences. Some staff sat with children, enabling development in language and communication, and in the afternoon, children were given choices on whether they wanted to eat inside or outside. This shows children's choices were valued and respected. There was scope for further development of skills, for example, in responsibility around washing dishes and clearing up, or collaboration to prepare snack.

Children were benefitting from the use of personal plans which were regularly updated with families. However, during the inspection, we identified some key strategies within plans that were missing. This resulted in missed opportunities to use these to engage and improve outcomes for some children. Examples were the use of visuals to develop communication, and opportunities for children to be more active. Staff should continue to reflect on strategies within personal plans and monitor these for impact. This would further drive children's progress through their own strengths and interests.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were meaningfully engaged and actively involved in leading their play and learning. They benefited from a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences that promoted children's choice and independence, for example within themes around traditional tales and around insects and creatures. Children were experiencing a sense of wonder investigating insects outdoors. This was facilitated by staff who made suggestions around where they might be hiding, and asked questions to further their learning. Children sustained interest in this for a long period of time. During inspection, we heard staff using mathematical language; and there was development around numeracy and literacy as they retold stories and counted out spoons of porridge to feed 'the three bears'.

Families told us staff offered a variety of experiences to enhance learning and development, and that children were sharing examples of learning at home. An example of this was around lifecycles. One told us, 'This has led to us growing our own vegetables and sunflowers'. Another said they felt staff were creative in ways for their child to develop literacy skills through their own interests. They expressed their child was now 'coming home showing signs of writing their own name!' These important links between home and nursery were improving outcomes for children across broad curricular areas.

Most staff were responsive and looking for ways to promote creativity and curiosity in children. Securing their wellbeing and emotional resilience was important to them, particularly their right to play and choose. However, there were some missed opportunities to enhance children's thinking and reasoning through effective questioning, and around when to interact and when to step back. Staff should now consider how they can facilitate children to have time to consider, discuss and reflect on their own or with peers. They should consider developmentally appropriate levels of communication and questioning for individual children so that progress can be made at a pace that is right for them.

There were a few missed opportunities to plan and provide for the mix of stages and the different types of play and learning taking place. Some staff did not recognise children's current interests or potential patterns of learning. As a result, children's curiosity was stopped or hindered. Continued development of staff's knowledge around the adult role and how to effectively support children's play and learning will be of benefit moving forward.

Effective planning and tracking systems were in place to support and promote children's progress. This was informed by observations of children in learning journals, as well as systems put in place to track children's interests and development over time. This resulted in an approach that was child centred and responsive to children's learning. Some observations in learning journals were individualised and had clear descriptions of learning. Staff should now focus on which aspects of learning are significant at that point in time. Clarity around this would ensure these assessments informed clear next steps and secured children's overall progress.

Clear prompts in planning enabled staff to think in terms of progressing children's learning through developing their curiosity, creativity, and inquiry. This meant there was focus on keeping things motivating and interesting for children. Next steps were in place to secure ongoing progress. Staff should now include how they can best use the spaces and experiences within the nursery and their own interactions to identify clear next steps and secure children's progress. Further work and refreshing knowledge around best practice document Realising the Ambition (Education Scotland 2020) would support staff in this.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, when taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were welcomed into an inviting, bright and calm setting. Resources were accessible enabling children to lead their own learning. There was plenty of light and ventilation with free flow access to the outdoors area. The environment was sensitively structured to take account of children's age and stage of development and learning. Distinct play areas were set up, and these reflected children's interests and celebrated their successes and achievements. For example, portraits drawn by the children were up on the wall in the home corner giving a real-life experience of home. There were also cosy areas for children to relax. This means the environment was well structured to support children's wellbeing and development.

The large kitchen area was open to children and they had meals in there. At other times of the day, this became obsolete. Enhancements to this, such as baking, or playdough making for example, would contribute to continuous provision of high quality play and learning experiences across all areas. Some planned activities out in trays were also not well used. Staff should continue to monitor and assess engagement in these so they can adapt them to children's interests and current stages of play and learning. This will result in higher engagement and attainment across all areas.

Clear links to planning were evident throughout the environment, and literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing were weaved throughout to increase exposure to these key areas. Examples included resources to support storytelling, such as story spoons, bears and porridge, and numerals and dot patterns at snack time. There were also names and pictures on stones for a 'feelings check in'. Well-resourced sensory play experiences were available which invited creative and absorbing learning experiences. Outdoors was inviting and rich in some play and learning opportunities. This resulted in creating a sense of wonder and in sparking children's imagination. On the day of inspection, there was a lack of opportunities for children to be active and develop gross motor skills. Staff explained that bikes and scooters did come out on a rota for children. The service should continue to reflect on providing choice and flexibility within rotas so that all children are enabled to develop skills in all areas.

Following two serious incidents, further steps had been taken to keep children safe in the setting to prevent children being able to leave the building unattended. All staff could talk about updated procedures since the incidents occurred and updated risk assessments had been put in place. During inspection, staff used head counts and tally marks on boards to monitor where children were in the setting, resulting in minimising these risks in future for children.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with families. These were audited to identify any recurrent themes which helped keep children safe. Children and staff washed hands regularly and staff engaged in touch point cleaning throughout the day. We highlighted some issues around infection prevention and control within the changing area. The staff team welcomed this advice. We suggested lockers be moved elsewhere to ensure privacy and dignity for children having personal care at all times, and to reduce infection spread of any items in and out of the area in lockers.

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 key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A clear, shared vision, values and aims for the service was positively informing practice. This was clearly embedded and reflected in planning approaches and was developed across the whole school community. Leadership occurred at all levels. Staff were empowered and supported to lead on their own interests, making use of their individual skill sets. Those we spoke to were passionate about these and were beginning to think about the impact on outcomes for children. An example of this was how the 'Jigsaw' programme was having a positive impact on children being able to discuss and talk about their wellbeing, manage bigger emotions and how to keep themselves safe.

Staff were well supported by the senior leadership team alongside an effective, efficient quality assurance process. One staff member told us the head teacher was 'a champion of early years'. Each staff member undertook action plans for their areas of leadership, and fed into others to ensure an integrated improvement focus. Staff should continue to develop these by looking at different ways of measuring success, for example through observations of how children are using any interventions or how engaged they are in them. This will give staff a clearer picture around what the impact has been for children, and whether it is having the required result of boosting attainment, achievement and wellbeing. It will also more clearly inform next steps in their plans.

Clear, robust self evaluation, as well as a moderation cycle were enabling the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children and families' particular needs and choices. This evidenced high expectations for quality. The head teacher involved parents in choices around how often to have planning meetings for those children who required additional support, and used clear data to inform individualised targets moving forwards. Similarly, more generalised gaps, for example in early literacy development had been identified and analysed and interventions had been implemented within the improvement plan. This showed that play and learning remained at the heart of improvement planning, and meant staff could be clear around a variety of play opportunities to secure progress.

Cyclical reviews and monitoring of staff-child interactions showed high capacity for improvement. This will continue to support staff to look at developmentally appropriate commenting and questioning as already stated within this report. Regular meetings, appraisals and feedback from supervisions ensured a collaborative, empowering approach. Robust monitoring across many quality indicators such as planning, personal plans and medication also contributed to a culture of continuous improvement. This ensured that improvement was maintained and sustained over time.

Families told us they felt fully involved in their child's care and that they were meaningfully involved in helping to develop the setting. For example, they had been involved in the creation of the vision, values and aims. They agreed their ideas and suggestions were used to influence change. One told us, 'Communication and updates we receive from leadership are great'. There is a needs based structure around planning meetings for children which supports meaningful connection between the service and families. There is also a learning consultation process where staff can more formally share learning and development of individual children with families to support collaborative work between home and nursery. Staff highlighted further parental engagement as an area they would like to improve further. We signposted them to new guidance coming soon from the Care Inspectorate called 'Me, my family and my Early years setting'.

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 key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Deployment and levels of staff were very effective ensuring good outcomes for children. Due to the small numbers of children, they were cared for almost on a one to one basis. This meant staff were always on hand to meet their needs. Ratios were met and there was a good mix of experience and qualifications across the team. Staff were welcoming, calm and vigilant. Many were involved in further study which supported their enthusiasm and further development. This will continue to improve outcomes for children going forward.

Staff communicated and supported each other when they had to leave the room. They informed each other as children came in from outdoors or went outdoors, and made use of a tally board to provide a visual to everyone. This kept children safe, and ensured staff remained vigilant around the whereabouts of children.

Weekly meetings were minuted to keep all staff informed and involved. These were stored digitally to ensure everyone could keep up to date due to differing staffing patterns. The senior leadership team also met weekly. All of this supported rich, professional dialogue around children's needs and learning and promoted a continuous culture of improvement.

Staff's enthusiasm and commitment came through clearly in feedback to us. All staff felt they were deployed to make the best use of their skills and expertise. Staff were clear on their roles and expectations and most were committed to nurturing the shared vision, values and aims of the service. This was supporting a 'home from home' experience, and outcomes for children were being improved over time through nurture, child led play and learning, and sound improvement planning.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for hand washing after outdoor play. This is to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a)&9d) Welfare of users.

Timescale for implementation: within seven days of receipt of this report.

This requirement was made on 22 November 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

Handwashing was observed clearly throughout the day. There was a toilet and sink outdoors to support handwashing outdoors. When handwashing, staff attended with children and talked them through stages, using visual displays above sinks. There was also evidence of IPC being regularly quality assured.

Met - within timescales

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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