Stonehouse Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Townhead Street
Stonehouse
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ML9 3EL

Telephone: 01698 792 377

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 May 2022

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003016825

About the service

Stonehouse Nursery Class is registered to provide care to 33 children aged from three years to not yet attending primary school.

Care is provided from a nursery class in Stonehouse Primary School, located within the town of Stonehouse, Larkhall. The service is close to shops, local transport routes and other amenities.

Children were accommodated within one playroom that led directly to a secure outdoor area.

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place between 10 May 2022 & 17 May 2022, and one inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with children using the service and three of their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice
- reviewed documents.

What people told us

For this inspection, we received views from three parents and carers of children who attended the nursery. Families told us that they were happy with the quality of care their children received. They highlighted the environment as a key strength of the service, describing it fun, engaging and well resourced. Parents also commented positively on communication and told us that it was regular, informative and efficient.

We talked with several children who told us that they had "good fun" at nursery. They said that they liked games, playing outdoors, and building things.

Self assessment

We did not ask the service to submit a self-assessment in advance of this inspection. Quality assurance, acting on feedback from people using the service, and the quality of the service's improvement plan were considered as part of this inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

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

Care and support needs of children were being met. Relationships between children and staff were respectful and nurturing, with support offered in a dignified way. A parent told us how they and their child had been supported through challenges.

An individual approach to meeting children's needs was supported by links with external agencies such as educational psychology, community nursing and speech and language therapy. This ensured care and support for children was consistent. We observed staff being respectful and sensitive of children's personal preferences and individual needs.

Children were valued, loved and secure. Their rights were respected and their voice was celebrated and acted upon. Interactions were at children's level and natural. Children were engaged in reflective discussions about emotions and emotional wellbeing. For example, a staff member was observed speaking with a child and provided reassurance "we can be brave and try to understand if it's not always working out our way and that's okay because we will have the opportunity on another day".

Personal plans were in place for each child and contained information to help meet their needs - for example, targets for learning, likes and dislikes and allergy information. This supported children's care and learning needs to be met.

Planning for learning was child-led and responsive to children's interests and needs. For example, children built a large train track. They were encouraged to use all space available in the room for the activity, which helped to progress their skills such as problem solving. One child was having fun building the track and told us "This train track is so big and I'm building it all the way over to the sand and stones".

Appropriate infection control procedures were in place. Hand washing was embedded in the staff and children's day such as after outdoor play, and before lunch and snack. Posters and visual cues were displayed to support this.

Children ate lunch in the school dining room and staff told us that mealtime experiences were a developing area. For example, lifelong skill development in self-serving, pouring and cutting food would provide more opportunities for children to develop their independence. The manager and staff should review mealtime routines and begin exploring how rich meaningful mealtime experiences can be provided. This will ensure children can enjoy unhurried mealtimes in a relaxed atmosphere and ensure the pace of the day matches the needs of children.

Children had the opportunity to take part in a range of stimulating experiences. This included opportunities to take risk, be challenged in their learning, and have their curiosity sparked.

Opportunities to develop ideas, thinking and imagination were enhanced through learning such as the life cycle of a butterfly and investigating a worm farm. A child told us "Butterfly growing is so exciting."

Medication was administered and recorded in line with best practice. Forms were up to date and relevant paperwork such as asthma action plans were in place. Medication for individual children was stored in a safe and secure location out of the reach of children, this was labelled with the child's name. However, the manager should ensure storage includes the child's date of birth and aligns with best practice guidance. This will contribute to children's health, safety, and wellbeing.

Children were protected from harm by staff who had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Regular child protection training took place to ensure staff were confident in recognising and responding appropriately to any concerns.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this theme as very good, where we found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

Stonehouse Nursery Class was bright, spacious and a pleasant environment for children to learn, play and relax. It provided a welcoming ethos with plenty of natural light and fresh air.

Measures were in place to ensure the environment was well maintained, clean and tidy. For example, cleaning checks were in place and hand gel stations were located around the service. A parent told us "The nursery environment, particularly outdoors, is always incredibly well resourced and full of interesting things to engage the children."

Children were protected from harm through a variety of safety measures. For example, a secure entry system and the safe storage of hazardous materials.

Children were able to flow between indoors and outdoors during their play. Outdoors provided lots of opportunities to develop learning through nature and sensory play. For example, children were pretending to hide and chatter in the bushes with each other and other children in weatherproof suits were enjoying the sensory experience of laying down and swimming in a mud pit. This provided children with suitable spaces to play and learn in a way that best suited their needs.

Indoor and outdoor spaces were inviting, well organised, well-resourced and offered opportunities to spark children's interests. For example, indoors included areas such as construction, sensory, and a creation station where children's creations were displayed respectfully, celebrated and re-visited.

Toys and furnishings were plentiful, varied and enabled children the opportunity to develop skills, ideas and thinking across the curriculum. There were small and quiet spaces on offer where children could relax, be cosy and comfortable. Children had access to a quiet room which was resourced with beanbags, cushions and books helping support their emotional wellbeing.

Appropriate risk assessments were in place which included visual checks of areas. We were told of an update to the risk assessment which was not recorded. We asked this to be actioned to ensure all staff were aware of expectations.

The outdoor environment was supportive of learning in nature. For example, thyme, rosemary, strawberries, and peppermint were growing and in bloom because of children's interest in planting. Other outdoor sensory experiences such as planting peas in the school garden and having the time and space to explore and run on the hills helped develop physical skills. This provided children with a range of experiences that stimulated natural curiosity and creativity.

Children were engaged in opportunities linked to the local and wider community from within the school. For example, fundraising games and challenges for charity, a toothbrushing experience with older children from the school and participation in world book day. The service told us they were re-building wider community links as Covid-19 restrictions eased and said these would enhance children's experiences. We agreed that this would provide children the opportunity to participate in a range of recreational and social, learning activities outdoors.

Children were engaged and busy in all areas and were supportive and understanding of each other. They were happy, chatting, singing, and laughing in their play.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

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

Staff had formed trusting and positive relationships with families and worked together to meet children's needs. They had recently begun welcoming families back into the service. They were happy and committed to their roles and placed children at the centre of their practice. There was a positive team approach and staff told us they felt supported by each other and shared some reflections of practice. This helped to provide consistency and continuity for children in their learning and care.

Interactions with children were skilled, informed, and relaxed. A nurturing approach by staff was observed at different points the day. For example, staff supported a child to transition from free play through to lunch by skilfully knowing which parts of the transition the child would be comfortable with and for how long - this sensitive approach ensured that the pace of day matched the needs of the individual child.

A parent told us "It is clear to see how hard the nursery staff work to ensure all of the children are happy, thriving and safe."

Staff had participated in training such as reading, online learning and courses which were contributing to improving children's experiences. For example, training on communication led to a variety of strategies being implemented such as visual cues on staff lanyards, recording buttons and recordable microphones.

This helped to adapt and enhance the communication environment for children. The manager and staff should continue with staff learning and reflective discussions and embed those improvements within staff practice. This will ensure staff provide children with high quality early learning and childcare.

Staff reflections from learning had impacted positively on outcomes for children. For example, at a recent staff meeting plans for learning were discussed and adapted to ensure they were responsive to individual children's needs.

Staff caring for children were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. They are the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. They provide public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice and support the professional development of those registered with them.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

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

Communication with families was a strength and was supporting meeting the needs of children. Methods for two-way communication were in place such as learning journals, newsletter and, a school app. This ensured families had the information needed to work in partnership. A parent told us "Communication is incredibly effective" and another parent told us "The staff have all been lovely and any concerns have been dealt with very quickly and efficiently."

Quality assurance processes contributed to children's care and support. For these processes to be robust, the manager with the staff team should introduce auditing of key records such as accidents and incidents and management of medication. This will provide opportunities for distributed leadership in the staff team and ensure the service is well managed.

The manager and staff team were committed to working well together to bring about positive change and opportunities for self-evaluation took place regularly, and all staff were able to contribute. For example, the service improvement plan priorities matched the current focus on communication and planning. This helped ensure a well led service.

Staff received regular feedback on their work and told us they felt they could approach the leadership team with any concerns. For example, observations of their practice and involvement in individual performance reviews led to helpful improvement conversations about how best to meet children's needs.

Through projects such as developing outdoors, coordinating additional support needs through staged interventions, and the introduction of Makaton as a form of communication using signs and symbols staff were sharing their learning within the team. Continuing to develop this type of practice will ensure children's needs are met in a way that is right for them as individuals.

Staff described changes that had taken place within the service since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new manager. The manager and staff team had created a shared vision and were reflecting to ensure that there was a culture of continuous improvement that informed practice in the service.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

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

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

In order to ensure that only staff who are registered with the relevant regulatory bodies, or when newly recruited are registered within the required timescales, are working in the service, the provider must develop and implement more robust monitoring systems and procedures by 31 May 2019.

This requirement was made on 10 May 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement

The provider's system and procedures for registration was updated to be more robust and all staff caring for children were registered with the appropriate professional bodies such as GTC and Scottish Social Services Council.

Met - within timescales

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The manager should ensure that all parental consent forms for medication to be administered while the child is at nursery are fully completed by parents and staff. More detailed information should be recorded to ensure staff are clear about the severity and signs and symptoms of conditions such as asthma and allergies. This, together with the now updated administration of medication forms, would contribute towards children's health, safety and wellbeing.

This recommendation was made on 10 May 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Parental consent forms for medication were fully completed by parents and staff.

Detailed information about the severity and signs and symptoms of conditions such as asthma and allergies was in place. This was contributing to children's health, safety and wellbeing, and therefore the recommendation was addressed.

Recommendation 2

The manager and nursery staff should review and update the risk assessments for the children's toilets and the new nappy changing room. This would include ensuring the main door to the children's toilets was closed during the session to minimise the potential risk of infection and in order to maintain children's privacy and dignity.

This recommendation was made on 10 May 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

It was clear that a visual risk assessment had taken place and practice had been updated to ensure staff minimised any risk. Items were stored in air tight containers in the nappy changing area and the main door leading to the toilets was closed when not in use.

To ensure any new staff are aware of this update we asked the manager to add those items to the playroom risk assessment document. This recommendation was addressed.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
10 May 2019	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed 3 - Adequate
21 Apr 2016	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 4 - Good 5 - Very good 4 - Good
16 May 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent
9 Jun 2010	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 4 - Good Not assessed Not assessed
10 Dec 2008	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 4 - Good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

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