Pencaitland Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

The Glebe
Pencaitland
Tranent
EH34 5EZ

Telephone: 01875 340 260

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 May 2023

Service provided by:
East Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002600

Service no:
CS2003016989

About the service

Pencaitland Primary School Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at one time, aged from three years to primary school age entry.

The nursery is on the grounds of Pencaitland Primary School. The school is situated in a residential area of Pencaitland, East Lothian. The nursery consists of a large, spacious playroom with a small kitchen area, cloakroom and children's toilets. The nursery have direct access to their own garden. They can also make use of the school gardens, library and gym hall.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday, 24 May 2023. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. One inspection colleague accompanied the inspector on this visit.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, notifications submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with fifteen children using the service and eight parents. We received written feedback from five parents.
- spoke with six staff and the head teacher
- we received written feedback from five staff
- observed practice and daily routines
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff who knew them well.
- Effective communication with parents meant children's needs were supported and parents felt included in the child's care and learning.
- Staff worked well together and had built trusting relationships with children and families.
- Children benefitted from high quality play experiences.
- Quality assurance processes had been developed to ensure continuous improvement.
- Children's health and wellbeing was promoted with daily access to the outdoors.

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?	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? 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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Staff had developed a nurturing and inclusive ethos evidenced through their warm and caring approach towards children and their families. Interactions between staff and children were responsive and engaging. Children's wellbeing was important to staff and nurture was embedded throughout their practice. All staff knew children well and this was evident when we spoke with them. One staff member told us "our first priority as a team is to ensure the children are nurtured into our setting".

Staff promoted children's independence, privacy and dignity in a thoughtful manner. For example, when helping children with their toileting needs and encouraging self-service at snack and lunch times. Children benefitted from warm attachments which supported them to feel loved, valued and respected.

Effective personal planning was reviewed with parents on a regular basis to ensure information held was current. Personal plans highlighted children's care and support needs ensuring care was right for each child. Children received continuity of care through transitions from home to nursery and moving onto primary one. This was evident in their transition information.

Children were being supported to develop an understanding of their emotions and how their behaviour impacted on others. Staff talked about feelings and used stories to help children begin to understand their emotions and begin to regulate them. For example, Goldilocks and the three bears highlighted privacy and kindness.

Children and their families were central to the process of effective communication and information reviews. Very good use of pastoral care notes highlighted significant events in the children's/families lives, enabling staff to respond quickly and sensitively to any changes. At the end of the day staff chatted about how the day had been and any significant observations they had made. This supported them to plan responsibly to meet children's care and interests.

Children experienced positive snack and mealtimes which were unhurried, relaxed and calm. We observed the rolling snack worked well for children. Staff sat with the children to support them to eat and engage in conversations which supported their language and communication skills. Staff recognised daily routines as a rich opportunity to promote attachment. Children got involved at lunch and snack times encouraging them to be independent and develop life skills. For example, collecting their own lunch tray, buttering their own toast and choosing what fruit they wanted to eat. Homemade lunches were served in the school dining hall where we saw children were comfortable with this routine. Parents chose lunches with their child through an online system. This meant children got foods they liked to eat but also were encouraged to try new foods. This indicated children were able to build positive relationships with food. Children had access to water at all times to ensure they remained well hydrated.

Medication kept in the service was stored safely and administration of medication records were securely kept. Accidents details were recorded and details were shared with parents verbally and in a written record. This meant children were kept safe.

1.3 Play and Learning

Play was highly valued in the service. We observed children having fun, building friendships and confidently taking ownership of their play and learning. Resources such as sand, water, paint, mark making, construction, role-play and loose parts play were available both indoors and outside. As a result, children were happy and active as they could make choices and engage in activities that interested them. Staff were attuned to children's individual learning styles and had a very good knowledge of child development. A balance of spontaneous and planned quality experiences promoted children's choice and independence. This supported children to explore their own ideas and build on their interests and creativity. One parent told us "there is a great diversity of play and learning opportunities".

Staff were skilled and confident when introducing additional materials to extend children's play and learning. For example, watching caterpillars change into chrysalides and then emerge as butterflies. Children were fascinated by this and was of real interest to them. Children had opportunities to take photographs around the nursery, and these were used for discussion and displays. Staff interactions with children about what they are planning to do supported their decision making.

Numeracy and literacy were promoted with a very good selection of resources available across the nursery. Staff were encouraging children to explore maths activities and supported children to use these successfully. Pictures and print on wall displays around the nursery related to current themes and children's interests, including words relating to planting and growing flowers and vegetables.

Staff were supported by an early years teacher with targets for improvement. This meant children benefitted from staff broadening their skills in relating to tracking children's progress. Written signs, pictures, stories and singing were embedded in play experiences which meant children's understanding of what they were doing was reinforced. Singing and counting was embedded in many aspects of their play.

Parents told us they enjoyed stay and play sessions where they could spend time in the service, watch and take part in children's experiences and look at their child's learning journey. We observed very good relationships between staff and parents as they attended a session on our nursery visit. Having just attended a stay and play session one parent commented "we could see again the great variety of toys and play opportunities both inside and outside". Parents and carers were encouraged to share skills and special interests they may have in the service, including accompanying visits to the nearby woods. Feedback we saw from this was evident both families and children enjoyed these experiences.

Effective use of loose parts play materials across the service meant children's creativity was promoted as they were able to develop their problem-solving skills. Children were learning about floating, sinking and shadows while others were enjoying added water to sand and making mud pies. Other children were engrossed in watching snails and making a den for them. Children had a lot of fun finding out about the world around them. Children's experiences and thoughts were displayed in floor books for them reflect on and chat about. Children's achievements both in the service and at home were celebrated in 'wow' moments which effectively promoted children's self esteem and confidence.

Children benefitted from being able to choose between indoor and outdoor play as free flow between spaces worked well for them. Children could take resources between areas which promoted extended learning and curiosity. Children spent a lot of time outdoors and enjoyed the benefits of fresh air, physical exercise and uninterrupted use of open-ended materials.

We saw staff supported play well with very good levels of reflective questioning which promoted confidence and independence as they enjoyed risky play. Some children liked to play on tyres, wooden blanks, jumping from crates and building dens. Staff encouraged this and allowed them to take some risk in their play which helped children to reflect on their safety.

Children were accessing the wider community as the service was an integral part of the wider school community. Where appropriate children sometimes took part in school assemblies and were in the process of implementing a program of collaborative working with primary one with a focus on the garden. This promoted their self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

The secure environment welcomed parents, professionals and visitors. Information boards for parents shared staff photographs and their roles in the service, improvement planning and children's art work. One parent commented their child was "thriving in the environment".

Resources were of a good quality and set up to meet the needs and interests of children. Homely touches, decoration and displays made by the children helped them to feel welcomed and included. Children were confident moving around between the indoor and outdoor spaces. This showed us children felt safe and secure. The outdoor space offered children ample space for them to be active and have fun. There were plans to develop the grassy garden area to the rear of the building in collaboration with primary one. However, currently this area was a missed learning opportunity for nursery children to explore and play in. For example, digging, looking for bugs and insects, growing and planting, learning about nature and having story times under the trees.

Children were involved in risk assessing the indoor and outdoor spaces. This gave them a sense of responsibility in caring for their environment and themselves. One child told us "I like to help tidy up and I am a very good tidier". This showed us children took pride in what they were doing and their environment.

Toilets and nappy changing facilities were kept clean throughout the day. We asked the service to ensure the nappy changing area met all the requirements in the Space to Grow guidance. This included, boarding off the electrical equipment and addressing the fire safety door which directly led to the cloakroom area in order to ensure children's privacy and dignity were maintained. This was being reflected on and actioned by the end of our visit. Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place and in line with current guidance. This meant children, parents and staff experienced a hygienic and healthy environment. Staff should continue to monitor and reflect on the environment in order to maintain their good standard.

Staff had a good understanding of confidentiality and this was reflected in their communication with parents. Children's information such as care plans and registration information were kept securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed the information to meet children's needs. This meant, protection of children's information complied with relevant best practice.

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 indicator very good.

Children and parents benefitted from a service whose vision, values and aims promoted a positive and inclusive learning and fun environment. Children, parents and staff had voted for the aims and values they wished to see in service and this promoted inclusion. We observed staff to be motivated, happy and an enthusiastic team who had created high quality outcomes for children. One parent told us "I have great confidence in the leadership of this setting and could not fault them at all".

Quality assurance was very good and involved collecting and acting on feedback from staff, parents and children. Improvement planning included developing and refreshing the curriculum, gaining a deeper understanding of pedagogical approaches and effective use of target setting and assessment. This demonstrated a reflective and considered approach to the development of the service.

Staff were committed to their roles and shared responsibility for the monitoring and development of the service. This included tracking systems and team discussions. Staff were keen to further update their learning and had attended continuous development sessions to ensure they felt supported in their role. Recent training included a managing stress and behaviour event which they had enjoyed.

Reflection was used to positively inform practice underpinned by strong consultative relationships between staff and the head teacher. This told us the service had a good capacity for change and improvement. To ensure continued improved outcomes for children and family's staff were proactive in making good use of best practice guidance. This enabled them to reflect and implement their learning to further meet the needs of children.

Team staff meetings were held regularly and included the head teacher. Staff told us they discussed and reflected on practice issues and planning. They all had input into these meetings and could discuss issues they felt needing raising. Minutes were shared with staff not working that day to ensure everyone was included in actions and outcomes.

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 indicator very good.

During out visit there was a real buzz about the nursery with happy children who were fully engaged in their play. Staffing levels in the service ensured there were sufficient staff to carry out their vision and values. We observed a confident and knowledgeable staff team who were respectful and supportive of each other. Positive role modelling between staff helped children develop positive and understand supportive relationships.

Effective arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day which ensured very good transitions. This ensured there was always enough staff to focus on children's needs. Staff breaks were planned and supported by lunch cover staff to minimise the impact on children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. One parent told us "staffing levels appear to be great at all times and everyone is very kind and welcoming".

Staff told us they felt supported by management. They offered flexible support to each other. For example, one staff member had been inside covering snack and needed to get some fresh air outdoors so a staff swop was made. Staff had different skills and interests which work well together to create positive outcomes for children.

The wellbeing of staff was of great importance to the head teacher and there was a good ethos of staff attendance in the service. This meant staff felt supported and valued and promoted positive experiences for children across the day.

An effective keyworker system promoted strong links between home and nursery. Families and children were kept informed of who would be caring for their child. This meant staff were able to develop positive attachments with children and their family and provide very good levels of individual care and support. Parents told us information sharing from the nursery was very good and informative.

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?	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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