# Carolside Primary Nursery Class
# Day Care of Children

Carolside Primary School
Ashfield Road
Clarkston
Glasgow
G76 7TX

Telephone: 01415 707 100

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
25 May 2023

**Service provided by:**
East Renfrewshire Council

**Service provider number:**
SP2003003372

**Service no:**
CS2003017003

## About the service

Carolside Primary Nursery Class provides a care service to a maximum of 96 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. The care service provider is East Renfrewshire Council. The service operates from two separate buildings within Carolside Primary School grounds in the Clarkston area of East Renfrewshire. In addition, children have free-flow access to extensive, secure, adjacent outdoor play areas. The service is close to shops, schools, transport routes and other amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 17 May 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 throughout the inspection year. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with some of the children using the service and reviewed survey responses from 11 parents whose children attend the service.
- Spoke with the service provider, manager and staff.
- Observed practice and staff interactions with children.
- Reviewed documents

## Key messages

- Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.
- Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful.
- Staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge.
- Children were provided with a rich variety of outstandingly high quality learning experiences.
- Staff participated in a sector leading partnership working with potential to support play and curriculum planning practices for children at local, national and international levels.
- Play spaces offered excitement, were richly resourced and appeared attractive to children.
- Very strong leadership of the service supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential.
- Adaptations to staffing arrangements and practices during children's lunchtime routines were identified and advised.

## 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? | 5 - Very 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

Overall, we evaluated this key question as very good as we found performance demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require any significant adjustment.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

We looked at how the nursery class's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Children benefited from a highly skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their sound knowledge of child development and detailed knowledge of wellbeing resulted in children's individual needs being met. Throughout the various play sessions, we observed it was clear that children experienced sensitive and respectful caregiving. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included. Staff involved families in decisions about their child's care and development. This enabled the relevant staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. Staff were highly skilled in using the information in children's personal plans to meet the needs of children requiring additional levels of support. A parent commented: "The support our son has received at Carolside has been fantastic. They identified triggers for our son's challenging behaviour very early and put in place a robust plan to support him. This involved specific strategies including one-to-one support, the use of the "cabin" for quiet time as necessary, and placing him in a group which was suitable to his needs. The school also sought advice from educational psychology at an early stage." We discussed with staff how personal planning approaches could be enhanced for all children by extending the use of SHANARRI wellbeing indicators to provide an up to date summary of ongoing key support, care and learning needs for every child.

Staff used an online digital portal to share learning story journal observations of children with parents. These observations were based on the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence, regularly reviewed and included targets for achievement and next steps for learning. One parent commented: "SeeSaw has been amazing as staff regularly provide updates and pictures of my child, what she's been doing and what skills the activities are meant to progress. Communication with the nursery class is made very easy."

We highlighted how administration of medication systems could be improved to include children's pictures, consent forms and administration guidance within each box, as well as recording and monitoring of first dosages. These changes were taken forward by staff during the course of our inspection.

### 1.3 Play and learning

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge. Staff told us they worked hard to provide a rich variety of high quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements. The work of the staff had recently been recognised by UNICEF achieving a 'Rights Respecting' gold award. Through discussion with staff, it was evident they shared a clear understanding of the resulting impact of a rights based approach on the breadth and depth of children's learning. Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. Children's voices were highly valued, and they were empowered to lead their own play and learning. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn.

Highly effective questioning provided opportunities for children to develop their thinking, widen skills and consolidated their learning through play experiences. This supported children to achieve their potential. A range of strategies and regular opportunities through structured activities and programmes supported children to flourish and achieve. This significantly contributed to the inclusive ethos of the service. One parent commented: "Fantastic opportunities for parental involvement through stay and play, online activities, send home science bags and skill sharing in nursery with the children. I honestly think the nursery have a fantastic, varied approach to all areas of the curriculum and they are providing excellent opportunities for the children to build resilience and confidence in themselves."

We discussed with staff observation approaches that could help identify and evaluate play experiences that children found particularly engaging and challenging. We highlighted how this could help foster meaningful discussion between children and staff about play and development. We discussed with staff how this would enhance the systems already in place for recognising children's achievements as well as further promote children's sense of ownership and leadership of play.

We found that staff had been involved in sharing and shaping play practices across the early years sector at local, national and international levels. Staff had presented at national conferences focusing on play and enquiry based learning where they shared and celebrated their success in taking forward Froebelian based approaches within the nursery class and the early stages of the primary school. Nursery staff had also shared their approaches to play based learning with international colleagues from Iceland, a wide range of other local authority providers as well as other early learning and childcare services provided by East Renfrewshire Council. This track record of innovative practice was sector leading and supported experiences and outcomes for children which were of outstandingly high quality. We were confident that the excellent performance we found in relation to this individual quality indicator was sustainable and that it would be maintained.

## How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found important strengths which supported positive outcomes for children attending the service.

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a warm, welcoming environment with good ventilation and natural light. Two conjoined rooms and direct access to the outdoor area provided ample space for children's needs and interests. Children could access outdoors throughout the day through a specially created child height door. The addition of outdoor toilets and mudroom supports children's outdoor experiences. We noted that the environments are structured to take account of the individual needs of children. New spaces had been created to offer children the opportunity to relax away from the busier playrooms, both indoors and outdoors. An extension was added which offers a comfortable, separate space for children to have snack and lunch. The service had made very good use of the spaces and offered stimulating resources which supported children's curiosity and learning. One parent told us: "The environment is perfect plus they have quieter areas for some children".

Some staff had engaged in Froebelian training and have used this to develop the outdoor space to include a fire pit, digging area and planting area. A variety of open ended and loose parts experiences were used by children to extend and develop their learning. The children told us they particularly liked using the mud kitchen, where we observed staff using creative ways to extend children's interests.

Staff informed us that they work as a team to evaluate how the areas are used and include the children in these conversations to plan ahead. Creative use of a cabin area allowed for a family room in the main building while still offering extra quiet space for children who need it.

Staff worked well together to ensure that both indoor and outdoor environments were safe and secure for children. Appropriate infection prevention and control procedures were in place. Risk assessment and cleaning schedules were completed daily which helped minimise risk to children. We noted staff including children in risk assessment discussions. For example, asking children why they would need a helmet when playing on bikes outside. This supported children to be risk aware and to feel secure in their play environment. Staff informed us that the children visit the local community and take part in road safety activities outside. We highlighted and staff agreed that regular planned outdoor play opportunities within parks or woodland spaces beyond the setting would further increase opportunities for children to experience fresh air and enjoy challenging play. The senior management team agreed to make this a focus of future improvement and professional development planning. One parent commented: "There is a huge focus on outdoor education and the nursery do this extremely well. It would be interesting to see if structured weekly group outdoor sessions with skills focus and risk play would benefit the children".

Children's information was stored safely and securely and complied with best practice guidance. Electronic information was protected through appropriate systems and met general data protection requirements.

## How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

**3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

The senior management team promoted a shared vision for the setting that reflected the aspirations of children, families, partners and the wider community. They had created conditions where all staff felt confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process. Positive working relationships between the manager, principal teachers and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children.

Staff told us how management team provided a clear focus for their shared team work including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. We found that this leadership approach had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care. It had contributed to children's emotional health and wellbeing by ensuring the care they experienced was delivered by familiar key adults who were perceived as consistent, reliable, trustworthy, and responsive to their needs. One parent commented: "The whole staff team in the nursery are extremely supportive. Every staff member knows my child and his interests. I receive regular updates on how he his doing via the SeeSaw app, at pick up, parents night and also during the family 'Stay and Play' sessions. The staff are able to identify his strengths, how he's progressing and also inform me of any areas he requires a little support in."

We found that very strong leadership of the service supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. The staff team worked together very effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. They were keen to take forward current ideas, develop and implement best practice guidance. Staff were familiar with the Care Inspectorate 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' (Care Inspectorate, 2022).

The manager highlighted how previous inspection feedback had been used to support the development of an improvement plan that clearly set out the service priorities and targets for change. The management team told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. We found that these self evaluation processes enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children and families particular needs and choices. A parent commented: "I think the main thing Carolside does well is going above and beyond the expectations parents might have for a nursery. Things like the fire pit, working with tools, building activity challenges, all the arts and crafts, pushing their learning where appropriate. They always seem to be striving for continuous improvement and to excel."

## How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

### 4.3 Staff Deployment

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff throughout all elements of the day. The staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs which enhanced children's experiences and ensured children had the right support at the right time. Children who required additional support were well supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. This was enhanced through effective working relationships with families. One parent commented: "They are professional staff, who are extremely well organised. There is good communication with parents including providing personalised learning journals for each child. There is good inclusion of the parents and grandparents via stay play and learn sessions and other opportunities."

A robust induction process supported newly appointed staff to meet children's needs. The induction programme helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. As a result, they were clear about their roles and responsibilities which supported children's experiences. The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. Staff told us how their professional learning was linked to a wide variety of leadership roles within the team including: nurturing early communication and language; outdoor learning; literacy and numeracy; Book Bug; Froebelian approaches; oral health and hygiene. We found that this learning had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress and wider improvements in the setting.

We identified a number of adaptations to staffing arrangements and practices during lunchtime routines which would help realise the nursery's commitment to providing a more relaxed and nurturing environment for children during lunchtimes. This will increase opportunities for staff to be responsive to individual needs and support children to develop positive attachments with key adults. We signposted the manager to our practice note 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)' to support professional reflection on mealtime improvements within the staff team.

## 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 | 6 - Excellent |

| How good is our setting? | 5 - Very Good |
|---|---|
| 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities | 5 - Very 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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