Croy Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Croy Primary School
Dalcroy Road
Croy
Inverness
IV2 5PG

Telephone: 01667 493 356

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 April 2024

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017196

About the service

Croy Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 34 children at any one time aged three years to not yet attending primary school.

The service operates in the rural village of Croy. It is based within two dedicated playrooms within Croy Primary School. Children have direct access to a large, enclosed garden area at all times. The service is provided by the Highland Council.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 April 2024 between 8.30am and 4.30pm. Feedback was given on 19 April 2024. 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, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with five children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from ten families;
- spoke with six staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing care which supported their overall well-being.
- Planning approaches were being developed, to ensure a balance of responsive and intentional planning, which was contributing to children developing a range of life long skills.
- Children benefited from a warm and welcoming environment which told them that they mattered.
- The manager had identified time to fully support the nursery setting which had resulted in positive changes.
- The staff team worked well together to ensure children's needs were met at the right time. As a result, children felt valued and respected.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - 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 evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 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 staff are friendly and approachable. They show genuine interest and care in my child."

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.

Children experienced calm and sociable mealtimes. There were opportunities for independence and choice. Staff recognised the opportunity to build on relationships and joined children at snack and 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.

Establishing good working relationship with parents was important to the staff. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time, as well as online updates. Most parents felt communication was effective. One parent commented "staff are always very cheery and welcoming. Easy to chat to and I can see they care for the kids. Great at keeping us updated on how my child's days are going."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children were happy and engaged in their play. For the majority of the time, children benefited 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 to undertake adult directed activities. This reduced some 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.

Play experiences were in place to support children to develop skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Staff were available to children for storytelling and discussions. This supported children's enjoyment of literacy. Staff introduced new words in play, and referred to resources in the playroom in a meaningful way, which supported children's developing communication skills.

Staff's natural interactions supported children's numeracy development. For example, staff got down to children's level when talking with them, and used everyday experiences to explore counting. Most staff supported children's developing numeracy skills through play, such as during block play and water play, introducing mathematical language such as taller, longer, more and less. This contributed to children developing a range of lifelong skills.

Planning approaches were being developed to ensure a balance of responsive and intentional planning. Staff were becoming more confident in recognising the skills children were developing. This was reflected in the quality of observations within children's learning. Processes in place to track children's progress were still in the early stages of development. We discussed ensuring that children were challenged at an appropriate level, as well as supported, to contribute towards them reaching their potential.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The setting offered a calm and warm environment. It was a clean, tidy and well-maintained space that had plenty of natural light for children to play and learn. Staff had added homely touches such as plants and real life resources which enhanced the welcoming feel of the playrooms. Children were able to move freely between both playrooms and had ample space to play, inside and outside. This gave them the message that they mattered.

Play opportunities supported children's curiosity, enquiry, and creativity. Children freely accessed age-appropriate toys and resources to extend their play. Children's work was displayed throughout the setting, which 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, for example in the equipped mud kitchen, water play and planting. The setting was secure, with a clear perimeter fence. Staff were aware of where they needed to position themselves to ensure they had good vision of children playing. This contributed to children being safe as they played outdoors. Staff worked well together to ensure children were accounted for at all times, undertaking regular counts as children arrived and left the setting.

Overall, 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. However, arrangements for storage of items in the nappy changing area did not follow best practice guidance. The manager agreed to review this, and make the necessary changes, to ensure children were protected from possible spread of infection in this area.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

There had been two changes of manager since our last inspection. The current manager had been in post for four days, they engaged well with inspection process and were committed to continuing to develop the service to ensure positive outcomes for children and families. The previous manage developed an effective action plan, following our last inspection. They worked closely with staff to develop a shared understanding of where improvements were required and how they would be achieved. Actions were achievable and measurable. They had created an environment where staff felt supported, and more confident in their roles and responsibilities. This contributed to positive changes within the setting, leading to improved outcomes for children.

Arrangements were in place to give staff the opportunity to meet regularly with the manager. This had resulted in a more positive ethos within the team, who had benefited from individual meetings, as well as whole team meetings. Staff told us they felt more motivated in their role as they felt supported. They had accessed training as a whole group, and individually, to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. This was having a positive impact on children's experiences.

The manager valued the input of families. Families had been given opportunities to join their children in the setting for open days, with a focus on play and learning, as well as daily during drop off and collection times. Most parents who gave feedback felt they were involved in the life of the setting. We signposted the manager to the Care Inspectorate practice note "Me, my family and my childcare setting", to support her in meaningfully involving families in shaping the setting.

Effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were now in place. The manager had identified the time needed to fully support the setting. They spent time in the setting getting to know staff and children. Staff were more reflective of their practice, which along with quality assurance, was resulting in areas for improvement being identified. This now needs to be fully embedded to ensure children and families benefit from a culture of continuous and sustained improvement.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were cared for by staff who were warm, kind and nurturing. Staff provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children throughout the inspection. They 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 complimentary of the staff team, comments included, "Staff are always available to comfort and assure my child" and "Lovely, friendly staff who are caring and approachable".

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that the right number of staff were meeting children's individual needs, consistently throughout the session. Changes to staff deployment meant that when children needed additional support, this was available to them. Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision and quality engagement with children. As a result, children benefited 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 positive 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.

Induction procedures were effective in supporting new staff to have the necessary skills and knowledge to support children. New staff told us they had been made to feel welcome by the existing staff team. When temporary staff were required, they were given key personal information about children. This meant that children received the care and support that was right for them.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 6 October 2023, the provider must ensure that children are effectively supported by sufficient numbers of staff. They must, as a minimum:

a) review and make appropriate changes to staff deployment to improve experiences for children.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) which state that:

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

This requirement was made on 26 June 2023.

The timescale has been extended to 9 February 2024.

This requirement was made on 26 June 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The provider and manager had reviewed, and increased the level of staffing in the setting. Staff deployment had been reviewed to ensure that children's needs could be met. This had resulted in children's care and support needs being effectively met. This contributed to children receiving care and support that was right for them.

Met - outwith timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support children to achieve, the provider should, at a minimum:

a) improve the approach and skills of staff in relation to tracking and monitoring children's progress; and
b) support staff to develop their understanding of how to effectively observe and assess children's learning in order to plan quality learning experiences and meaningful next steps.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2023.

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff had undertaken further training in relation to planning approaches, observation and assessment. The quality of observations of children's learning had improved, with focus on the skills being developed. Processes to track learning and developed were being developed. As a result, staff were able to identify gaps in individual learning and development. This was contributing to planning experiences to support children to reach their potential. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To improve outcomes for children, the manager should develop an effective system of quality assurance and self-evaluation to support improvement planning. This should include, but is not limited to:

a) identify sufficient time to carry out the managerial role;
b) establishment of effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes; and
c) develop an effective monitoring programme, including individual support for staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2023.

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The manager had identified the time needed to fully support the setting. Effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were now in place. They spent time in the setting getting to know staff and children. Staff benefited from effective support and supervision. As a result, they were more reflective of their practice, which along with quality assurance, was resulting in areas for improvement being identified, and improved outcomes for children. This area for improvement has been met.

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	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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