Dochgarroch Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Dochgarroch
Inverness
IV3 8JG

Telephone: 01463 239720

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 November 2023

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017200

About the service

Dochgarroch Primary School Nursery is operated by The Highland Council and is based just outside the area of Inverness. Dochgarroch Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 16 children at any one time aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school

The accommodation provided with one playroom with access to a spacious outdoor play area. The outdoor play area contains a range of loose parts and open ended resources which extend and enrich the children's imaginative play and learning experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection visit which took place on 7 and 8 November 2023. 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 children using the service;
- reviewed email communication from parents and carers;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefited from warm and nurturing care from the staff team.
- Staff knew children well and had developed positive relationships with them.
- Children were happy, confident and actively involved in leading their play and learning.
- Children enjoyed a lovely calming mealtime experience.
- Effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes supported the ongoing development of the service.
- The views of children and families were actively sought to inform the development of the service.
- Effective staff deployment supported positive outcomes for children.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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 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 1.1: Nurturing care and support
Children had fun and were happy and relaxed during their time in the service. We saw that they were confident around staff, and had formed trusting relationships with them. Effective use of personal planning meant that children's current needs were identified and supported. This was carried out in collaboration with families and partners to promote consistency and continuity in care. As a result, staff knew children very well and contributed to effective partnership working between families and the service. Parents were overall very happy with the service, one parent commented "My child loves the nursery, it's fun, safe, nurturing, a beautiful place to learn and explore and this is all down to the staff".

Staff and management worked in partnership with outside professionals to improve outcomes for children when they needed additional help. For example, after liaising with speech and language therapy and the local health visitor, appropriate strategies had been identified and put in place to support children with communication and language development. As a result, children were supported to reach their potential.

Snack and lunch times were positive, relaxing and sociable times for children where they were provided with a range of opportunities to develop their independence. For example, children experienced a strong sense of pride as they helped to organise and serve the snack. They prepared fruit items, poured their own milk and water and cleared away their own plates and dishes. As a result, children had opportunities to take responsibility and learn key life skills. At snack and lunchtimes, staff sat with children, which provided opportunities to promote close attachments and develop their social skills. Food choices were healthy and nutritious, family requests for specific food items at lunchtime were accommodated and children had access to fresh water throughout the day to support hydration. This supported children to be nurtured through their daily experiences.

Medication was stored safely and securely and was easily accessible in case of an emergency. Medication consent forms were in place and were detailed to ensure staff had all the required information to maintain children's health and wellbeing.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and protected from harm. They could confidently tell us how they would respond if they had any child protection concerns. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning
Children were meaningfully involved in leading their play and learning. Experiences supported children's curiosity, enquiry and creativity. They were very well supported by staff who confidently scaffolded their learning experiences, supporting their development in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, while playing with blocks, children explored mathematical concepts around capacity and measure. As a result, children were well supported to progress and achieve their potential.

Children were happy and had opportunities to lead their own play which supported them to develop their confidence and sense of wellbeing. They were able to choose from a range of real life and natural resources which supported their imagination and curiosity. Staff asked open ended questions and challenged

children's thinking skills, encouraged them explore new ideas and problem solve together. This also contributed to children developing skills in literacy and numeracy.

The skilled interactions of staff meant children were supported to problem solve and become independent. Responsive planning was beginning to support children's emerging interests, enhancing and extending children's learning. Planning should continue to be developed to make consistent links to personal learning journals and planning for individual needs.

Personal learning journals were in place for all children which captured some of their achievements and progress. These contained observations and photographs demonstrating children's breadth of learning experiences. These should now be developed further to improve the quality of observations to capture the learning. The service had identified this as an area for improvement. Staff were currently being supported by the local authority to develop their skills in writing quality observations. Management should regularly monitor the quality of observations and next steps. This is to ensure the information supports planning of relevant play and learning experiences. This would enable provision of activities tailored to the needs and abilities of individual children and support them to be successful learners.

Staff recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with good opportunities to be outside. Children told us that they enjoyed playing outside which promoted physical energetic play to keep them active and healthy. We saw nice interactions between staff and children, with staff responsive to the individual needs of each child. For example, children were listening to a story in the garden while sitting with staff and also enjoying some arts and crafts activities. This experience provided opportunities to promote literacy, imagination and creativity.

Connections within the community enhanced children's experiences. For example, children went to visit their local cafe, walks along the canal and woodland area. Staff highlighted how beneficial these trips were and children really enjoyed their time within their community.

How good is our setting? 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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from an environment which was well furnished and homely. Careful thought had gone into softening the indoor environment. The setting provided a warm, calm and welcoming environment for children. Children had ample space to move freely and accessed space and resources to meet their needs. They had spaces to store their belongings and furniture was of an appropriate size. The setting was a clean and well maintained space that had plenty of natural light for children to play, learn and relax in.

The environment, both indoors and outdoors was carefully planned to reflect children's stages of development and their current interests. As part of their ongoing improvement work, the staff team had used best practice guidance to carefully consider the experiences and spaces available within the nursery. As a result, the playroom and outdoor space were set out in a manner which provided ample space for children's needs and enabled them to access resources easily and lead their own play. This gave a strong message to children that they mattered. This helped the children to use their imagination, be creative and problem solve.

Children benefitted from access to enclosed, spacious outdoor areas for play. Large equipment, open ended resources and opportunities for planting and growing offered children a variety of play experiences. Playing in the natural environment, promoted their well-being as they benefitted from fresh air and exercise. The staff also spoke very confidently of their plans to further develop the outdoor area. The garden provided a range of spaces for development of physical skills and exploration. The children had access to a variety of engaging and challenging resources and activities, for example, open-ended and natural resources, messy area and bikes/trikes. This supported children to develop their problem-solving skills and spark curiosity in their play experiences. Parents were overall very happy with the environment, one parent commented, "The staff are warm and welcoming and genuinely care about the children's experiences and the environment, they love coming to nursery".

The setting was well maintained, with effective measures in place to identify and rectify equipment and resources which needed repair. Children's safety was further promoted as staff understood their roles and responsibilities around infection prevention and control. For example, they supported children to wash their hands at appropriate times, demonstrating good practice. This minimised the risk of cross infection keeping children and staff safe and healthy.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children benefitted from a management and staff team who were committed to providing a quality service. This resulted in a shared vision for the development of the service. Staff were enthusiastic as they worked together to enable change. They demonstrated the awareness of the importance of self evaluation to support the delivery of high quality care and learning tailored towards children and families and will continue to encourage parents to contribute to improve the service.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in changes and improvements made within the services. The management team understood the importance of effective communication with families using the service. This helped evidence how the service valued the opinion of families and encouraged their involvement in the life of the nursery. For example, management had introduced some questionnaires and this was clearly shown in the service's self evaluation floor book. The management team took into account parental feedback and shared their views on what their next steps will be to develop the service. This supported families to feel respected and their views and opinions to be taken into consideration

Effective quality assurance identified areas of good practice and areas for improvement. A clear action plan was in place, detailing areas for development within the nursery. A quality assurance calendar was in place and used effectively to monitor important aspects of service delivery. Audits and observations of practice were used as part of the quality assurance processes in place. They included checks of children's records, a review of any accidents or incidents and observations of children's experiences. This had identified what they did well and identified changes that would improve outcomes for children. For example, monitoring of children's learning journals had highlighted the need to improve the identification of next steps and progression within learning observations. Staff and senior management are now planning to focus on the learning journals and plan the next steps for each child. As a result, children are making very good progress in many aspects of their learning.

Policies were in place which supported safe practice within the service. These were all regularly reviewed to ensure they followed current best practice and guidance.

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

The service was appropriately staffed to meet adult-child ratios and the staff team worked to ensure all areas of the service were appropriately supervised and supported. Positive relationships within the team meant that staff communicated well with each other to ensure children were safe and supported appropriately. They informed each other when leaving an area or when attending to a child's needs. For example, staff lunches were well planned to minimise the impact on the children while enabling staff time to rest and be refreshed. As a result, there was continuity of care for children by staff who knew them very well.

Staff knew children well and secure relationships between them had been established. We witnessed children being supported by staff in ways which were appropriate to meet their needs. This meant that children felt safe, secure and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported them. Busier times of the day, such as pickups/drops off were well managed. Staff were fully aware of the measures in place to keep children safe at these times.

A shared approach by the staff team ensured children and families were supported to achieve their potential. Strong connections with staff meant children and families felt confident and relaxed in the service. The care and support they received had a positive impact on their overall wellbeing.

Staff had clear roles, were flexible and moved with children dependant on their interests and needs, for example, when children wanted to go outdoors and members of staff went out with them. Staff placed themselves thoughtfully during busier times to ensure all children's individual needs were well considered. As a result, children benefitted from a very calm and positive experience.

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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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