Holm Early Learning and Childcare Centre
Day Care of Children

Stratherrick Road
Inverness
IV2 4YL

Telephone: 01463 232 697

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 September 2022

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017218

About the service

Holm Early Learning and Childcare Centre is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 76 children aged from three years to those attending primary school at any one time. Of those 76 no more than 24 are attending primary school. The nursery is operated by Highland Council. The setting operates term time only.

The early learning and childcare centre is located within three rooms within Holm Primary School in Inverness. Two of the rooms occupy a sperate building within the school grounds, both accessing a large outdoor area. A third room is located within the main school, with access to an enclosed outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 22 September 2022 between 8.30am and 5.00pm. The inspection was carried out by three 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 15 people using the service;
- reviewed email responses from four families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children experienced warm and nurturing care from a staff team who knew them well as individuals.

Children benefited from outdoor play experiences that supported their natural curiosity, learning and creativity.

Children led their own learning.

The staff team were flexible in their approach, ensuring children received the care they needed.

Effective quality assurance systems were supporting the service to continually improve.

The management team were effectively involving staff, children, and families in developing a shared vision for the setting.

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?	5 - Very 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 and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and confident in the setting. They were comfortable with the routines and relaxed in their interactions with staff. Staff welcomed children individually and there was a happy and relaxed atmosphere from the beginning of the day. This meant that children felt safe and secure.

Effective sharing of information had a positive effect on children's health and wellbeing. Children's care reflected their families' preferences and staff were confident when discussing individual children's needs. One parent told us they felt that they 'worked in partnership' with staff for the benefit of their child. We saw staff use strategies consistently to support some children within the setting. We discussed ensuring that all strategies were reflected in children's personal plans to ensure children's changing needs are responded to compassionately.

Snack and mealtimes were relaxed and calm. Children were given opportunities to develop their independence through helping to prepare snack, setting the table, spreading, and pouring. Staff sat with children, recognising the importance of daily routines as an opportunity to develop strong bonds. Children were supported to eat healthily within a safe environment.

Children attending the after-school club were excited to tell us that they had made their own pizzas for snack and had previously made scones using gluten free flour so that everyone could enjoy them. This meant that children felt included and respected.

Staff worked in partnership with outside professionals to improve outcomes for children when they needed additional help. Appropriate strategies had been identified and put in place to support children, for example with speech and language development. As a result, children were supported to reach their potential.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were engaged and having fun as they played, both indoors and outdoors. Skilled staff interactions supported children to express their thoughts and opinions and to problem solve. One group of children were being supported to make 'playdoh', discussing with each other the different colours and how to keep themselves safe when using hot water. Other children were building towers with blocks and comparing heights. This meant that children were being supported to develop their numeracy, literacy and language skills.

Staff used a balance of intentional and responsive planning to enhance children's opportunities for play and learning. Floor books captured children's interests throughout the setting, recording their voice and learning, and supporting developing mark making skills as children contributed to each floor book. As a result, children were meaningfully and actively involved in their learning.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of child development, supporting children's developing skills and emotional resilience by celebrating achievements with them. Staff were passionate about children's successes and recorded these in individual learning journeys, sharing these with families. The management team had identified as an area for improvement the consistency of observations. They should continue to monitor the quality of observations and planning for individual progress.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

The setting was warm and welcoming. Children were accessing quiet and cosy spaces in each of the playrooms, these were furnished with a variety of resources in each room. Some children were reading quietly in wigwams, while others were happy having quiet time underneath a table that had been turned into a den. Children had ample space for their needs which gave them a strong message that they mattered.

Children could independently access the enclosed garden areas from each of the three playrooms. Two of the playrooms shared a large and exciting outdoor space where children could play and learn and develop their natural curiosity. Some children were harvesting potatoes and carrots they had grown, excitedly sharing their produce with inspectors. This garden benefited from a range of surfaces and resources to challenge children and support their developing skills. The management team and staff had made significant improvements to the garden area of the third room, which they had identified as an area for improvement. Children had contributed to the development of this outside space, giving them a sense of pride and ownership. While improvements were being made, children also had access to another enclosed area within easy reach of their playroom. As a result, children benefited from fresh air and daily energetic play.

Some resources reflected the children's interests, such a tools and building materials available for a group of children who were learning about fixing things and building. Children were being supported to develop lifelong skills. We discussed with the management team increasing the amount of real, natural, and open-ended resources across all playrooms. They told us they had identified a budget to improve the breadth and range of resources across the setting and were in the process of consulting with children and staff about what they would like to have.

Robust infection prevention and control measures promoted children's health and wellbeing. This included supporting children's understanding of personal hygiene routines such as wiping their nose and washing their hands effectively. All playrooms were well ventilated, clean and uncluttered, as a result children were supported to play and learn in a safe environment.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

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

The management team demonstrated a very strong ethos of continuous improvement, involving children, families, and staff. They had created a setting where everyone felt empowered to share their thoughts and opinions. One parent told us "The headteacher welcomes feedback at any time". Nursery parents had been invited to work with parents of school age children in a working group reviewing the school's vision, values and aims. Parental feedback, along with evidence from quality assurance and self-evaluation, had informed the improvement plan for the setting. This meant that parents were meaningfully involved in the development of the setting.

Robust and effective quality assurance systems were in place. A significant amount of quality assurance and self-evaluation had taken place. Monitoring of the quality of observations of children's learning had resulted in good practice being recognised, and further training being delivered to increase staff knowledge and understanding of what makes a quality observation. In addition, staff had undertaken recent training in the use of floor books to support the planning process for delivering high quality experiences based on children's interests. As a result, staff had high aspirations and had confidence in their ability to support children to achieve their potential through high quality learning and play experiences.

Staff reflected well together, self-evaluating their practice using guidance such as 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged children'. Areas for improvement had been identified and action taken. For example, the quality of mealtimes had been recognised as an area for improvement. Rotas had been reviewed and changed to ensure that children received continuity of care from staff who were focused on them. The management team met regularly with staff, using systems which supported all staff to contribute effectively. This meant that the management team and staff were able to bring about positive changes for children and their families through 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 and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

There were sufficient staff in place to ensure children were effectively supported throughout their session. Staff were deployed in a way that meant there was a good mix of skills and experience across the setting. They communicated clearly with each other, and in a respectful manner, to create a positive ethos and to ensure that children's needs were met. This meant that children benefited from positive experiences.

The staff team worked well together to ensure that they moved throughout the setting in response to children's choices. We discussed with some staff the importance of clear communication at times of transition, such as moving between playrooms and larger outside areas. We signposted staff and the management team to the Care Inspectorate's "SIMOA" campaign to support staff's understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe.

Continuity of care across the day was supported by effective staff deployment. The management team had developed staff rotas which took account of busier times of the day such as mealtimes and transitions into and out of the setting. This meant that children received high levels of interactions throughout the day.

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

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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.