Newtonmore Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Newtonmore Primary School
Main Street
Newtonmore
PH20 1DN

Telephone: 01540 673 252

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 March 2023

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017251

About the service

Newtonmore Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 48 children aged three years to not yet attending primary school. The service is provided by Highland Council and operates in term time only.

The nursery is provided from two rooms within Newtonmore Primary School. The service offers both English and Gaelic medium. Children also have access to a communal room, toilets, outside areas and other areas outwith the school grounds.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 March 2023, between 9:00am and 4.00pm. 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 feedback received from three families;
- spoke with six staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children received very warm and nurturing care which supported them to feel secure.
- Staff supported children's developing language, literacy, and numeracy through rich learning experiences.
- Children accessed their local community regularly which enhanced their learning experiences.
- Very effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes supported improved outcomes for children and families.
- Staff within the setting, and across the wider school community, worked well together to meet children's needs.

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?	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? 5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this quality indicator. There were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children. There were very few areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Children benefitted from very warm and nurturing care from staff who were kind and respectful. Staff helped children to settle by offering reassurance and cuddles when needed. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure.

To support children to be happy and confident, staff had effectively used personal planning information to enhance individualised care, support and learning opportunities. Most parents told us that they were able to speak to staff daily. Staff were knowledgeable about children's wider circumstances and the impact these might have on them. As a result of this, children received the care and support that was right for them.

Snack and mealtimes were calm and unhurried social experiences. Children helped to prepare snack, developing their cutting skills. There were opportunities to develop independence skills, such as selecting their own food, spreading, and pouring. Staff used these routines to support children's developing language, literacy and numeracy, and develop close relationships. They were very knowledgeable about children's dietary needs. Children were supported to try different foods, as the catering team worked closely with the staff team to ensure individual needs were met. As a result of this very responsive approach, children's overall health and wellbeing was supported, and children enjoyed a positive experience.

Good working relationships with other professionals had been developed. Staff were confident in using appropriate strategies to support children to feel included and contribute to the life of the setting. This meant that children received the individualised support they needed to meet their full potential.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were engaged in their play and having fun. Staff used effective questioning to extend children's learning and to support them to develop their thinking and understanding. Children's current interests were at the centre of play and learning in both playrooms. For example, role play in the children's 'café' area within the Gaelic medium playroom, had been extended to visits to local cafes and shops. This resulted in children setting up their own café for school teachers as well as exploring where in the world food came from. This responsive approach supported children to develop their language, literacy, and numeracy skills. This meant that children were confident and progressing well.

Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of children's individual progress and development. Floor books were used to evidence children's developing interests. Effective use of these demonstrated the breadth and depth of learning taking place. One parent told us they "loved being able to see what their child had been up to", when it was their turn to have the floor book home to look at together. Children's learning journeys were used to record individual play and learning, some children proudly shared their folders with the inspector. They were able to recall what they had been doing with their friends and talked to staff about what they had learnt. Staff were confident in assessing children's progress and planned for their next steps. As a result, children were developing a wide range of lifelong skills.

Children had developed very strong connections within their local community, regularly accessing woodland areas, parks, and local services. Outdoor learning was a particular strength of the setting. Some staff had undertaken additional training through Virtual Nature Schools. Children accessing the English medium provision had been following an interest in animals; learning was extended to hunting for footprints in the local area, building their own jungle in the woods and exploring patterns found in nature. Staff were confident in providing challenging and creative experiences to consolidate children's learning. As a result of this, children's learning experiences 'beyond the gate' were being enhanced.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator. There were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed any areas for improvement.

The setting was uncluttered, flooded with natural light, and inviting to children. Children had access to areas where they could rest and relax, however, we discussed re-introducing soft furnishings to these areas to add warmth. There were some real life items and natural resources inside, with further loose parts outside. Staff told us they were keen to expand on these resources to promote children's developing imagination and curiosities. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces reflected children's current interests. Staff provided a variety of play experiences to engage and interest children. This meant that children benefitted from developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. Children had taken pride in creating their own wall displays which promoted respect for their environment.

The staff team within each playroom worked well together to remove potential risks to children, both indoors and outdoors. Staff understood the importance of children assessing risks for themselves and supported children to push their own boundaries safely. On the day of inspection, one child told the inspector they had climbed a tree for the 'very first time'. This meant that children were supported to enjoy challenging and fun play experiences.

Robust infection control procedures reduced the potential for the spread of infection. Staff followed best practice guidance around food preparation and handling, and supported children to wash their hands throughout the day. As a result, children were protected from possible harm.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this quality indicator. There were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children. There were very few areas for improvement.

The management team understood the importance of promoting a shared vision for the setting. They were involving staff, children, and families in reviewing the vision, values and aims. This meant that parents and families knew what to expect for their children from the setting, and that their opinions mattered. Parental involvement was a priority, ensuring that parents had a number of opportunities to be involved in the life of the setting.

Very effective and robust self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were in place. The management team had identified areas for improvement, for example increasing parental involvement, and continuing the development of processes to assess and track children's progress. They used national guidance and best practice to inform improvement planning, for example 'The Health and Social Care Standards' and 'The National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare'.

The management team met regularly with staff, as a team and individually. Meetings were focused on individual outcomes for children and continual improvement. Monitoring of staff practice and children's experiences provided evidence to inform improvement. Staff told us they felt very well supported by the management team and their colleagues. They were confident in their capacity to support improvement, undertaking self-evaluation of their practice against current guidance, such as 'My Active World' and 'How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare'. As a result, children and families were experiencing improved outcomes.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator. There were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed any areas for improvement.

The setting was effectively staffed to meet the needs of children. There was a good mix of skills, knowledge and understanding across the staff team. Staff told us they had different strengths and areas of interest, which allowed them to give children a wide variety of positive experiences throughout the day.

Children experienced continuity of care across the day from staff who knew them well. Staff worked well together to ensure that children were safe and accounted for, communicating clearly when children needed additional support. They planned activities and experiences considering the needs of children. As a result, they were able to always remain focused on children, which ensured high quality interactions.

We received positive feedback from parents about the staff team. Some of their comments included, 'Staff offer an organised and very eclectic mix of activities for the children both in and outdoors'. One parent felt communication could be improved. The management team had identified this as an area for improvement and were actively working with staff to increase opportunities for parental engagement.

There was a positive ethos amongst the staff team. Staff had developed close working relationships and communicated with each other with mutual respect. Newer members of staff told us they felt very welcomed to the staff team. Staff were committed to their roles, and motivated and enthusiastic with a shared vision to ensure that children were well supported.

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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