Dreghorn Primary School Early Years Class
Day Care of Children

Dundonald Road
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003017303

About the service

Dreghorn Primary School Early Years Class is provided by North Ayrshire Council. The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011 to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 40 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service operates out of purpose built premises within Dreghorn Primary School in the village of Dreghorn, North Ayrshire and is situated close to local amenities.

This was a focused inspection to evaluate how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic.

As part of this inspection virtual technology was used to view the environment and meet with staff and senior management. We carried out observation of the service and staff practices over two days, one visit on-site and one virtual. We also sought parents/carers views through telephone contact. The manager emailed us documents we requested as evidence during the inspection. These included policies and procedures specific to COVID-19, children's personal care plans, learning plans and risk assessments, staff meetings and training and environmental risk assessments.

What people told us

Some children were curious about who was visiting them virtually and smiled and waved to us. A few approached us to have a quick chat. All the children were busy with their chosen activities both outdoors and within the playroom.

The manager provided us with contact details of parents who were happy to share their and their children's experiences at the early years class. They spoke positively about the service and that their children had settled well and were happy to attend. They told us about the changes to communication methods as they had no access to the early years class during the pandemic. These included the availability of staff to have a person to person chat at the main entrance to the service, telephone calls and Facebook. Staff had maintained contact with them during lockdown, providing story times and ideas for shared activities so they were involved in their child's learning. One parent felt communication could be improved and we discussed this confidentially with the manager who agreed to act on this. Parents also said that they were kept up to date with new procedures such as social distancing, wearing face coverings and increased hand hygiene.

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 and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic? 4 - Good

5.1 Children's health and wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Children are nurtured and supported throughout their changed experience in their early learning and childcare setting.
- Effective communication with families enables responsive care to support children through changing circumstances.

Children were happy, settled and confident and were observed to be enjoying their experiences in the early years class both indoors and in the outdoor environment. Staff were kind and caring and engaged positively with the children.

The children had been fully supported through changes made to the environment and their overall experience within the setting. This included managing children within 'bubbles' to reduce group sizes and the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Staff had reviewed and adapted the space available so that each 'bubble' of children enjoyed the same experiences while remaining flexible to children's interests and preferences.

Staff had worked hard to raise the children's understanding of the need for good hygiene practices, including hand washing, and had developed fun ways to engage them in these activities. Staff encouraged and listened to the children while they shared their knowledge of Coronavirus and the differences made to their daily lives. The children spent a lot of time outdoors, helping to reduce the risk of infection and providing them with fresh air and exercise. The 'woodland' area had been further developed to provide interesting and fun learning experiences and engage the children in the natural world.

Information gathered from parents enabled staff to best meet the needs of individual children. Parents were involved in contributing to their child's learning, helping them to maintain links with the service and be involved. Reviews of children's personal learning plans took place in a safe way and parents could see the progress their child was making. Effective communication using various methods was put in place during lockdown when the early years class was closed. Parents we spoke with appreciated the daily story times and activities provided for them to enjoy with their children while they were not at the setting. Individual personal care plans describing children's health, safety and welfare needs and any support required were in place and reviewed with parents regularly to ensure any changes were taken account of.

Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities in protecting children from harm. They followed the service's child protection procedures, had participated in updated training and were sensitive to the impact on families the pandemic could be having. Relationships with other professionals had been maintained and was on-going, providing support to children who required additional input.

5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.

- children are protected as staff take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

The service had implemented safety measures, informed by the Scottish Government and Public Health guidance. Staff were kept up to date with any updates to the guidance and changes made where necessary. Policies, procedures and risk assessments had all been developed to take account of the current situation and to support staff in reducing the risk of the spread of infection. These included an operational guidance, COVID-19 policy, Infection Control policy and protocol, a snack policy and environmental risk assessments. Information on changes made within the service was shared with parents, giving reassurance of the steps taken to safeguard them and their children.

Staggered drop off and pick up times reduced the number of adults and children coming into contact with one another. Parents were aware that at this time they had no access to the playroom but that other methods of communicating with them were in use.

Enhanced cleaning took place by designated staff and the staff within the early years class ensured toys and equipment were cleaned between the morning and afternoon sessions for different bubbles of children attending. Staff had undertaken Infection Prevention and Control specific to COVID-19 and took account of any updates in their daily practice in keeping everyone safe. Our observations identified that the environment and play materials appeared clean and well maintained. Windows remained opened while the children were indoors to provide natural ventilation and they spent much of their time outdoors in the fresh air, reducing the risk of infection.

Staff maintained social distancing and were clear about their roles and responsibilities within the environment. They were aware about the guidance with regards to face coverings and the manager acted immediately on advice on the safe storage of these items.

5.3: Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19.

- Staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and families.
- Staff are well supported and confident.

Continuity of staff had been difficult at times due to staff absence, however supply staff were introduced sensitively and effectively and didn't appear to have an adverse effect on the children's experiences. All staff were aware of their own roles and responsibilities contributing to the smooth operation of the service.

The manager visited the playroom regularly, observing daily practices and supporting staff with their health and well-being. Staff told us that they valued the support provided by senior staff and management. They told us they were approachable and positive changes had been made in their daily practice. The support staff received ensured they were committed to their work and to providing a safe, happy and secure environment for the children.

We observed caring and respectful relationships between staff and children. Staff told us about how they had adapted communication methods and shared learning experiences with parents throughout the pandemic. Parents we spoke with were appreciative of this, understanding the difficulties staff were faced with but still feeling included in their children's learning journey.

Staff had undertaken a range of training opportunities, in particular during lockdown, which included COVID Infection Control, Outdoor Learning, Language and Literacy and Understanding Autism. The senior staff member provided a presentation to staff on the environment and met with them on-line to keep them updated. Staff appreciated the opportunities provided to them to progress their own self development and found their learning useful to help them in their daily roles.

Areas for improvement

1. Staff should review children's records, in particular individual risk assessments, to ensure they contain accurate information.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19)

2. Staff should further assess the risk of children from separate 'bubbles' mixing.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17)

3. Staff should ensure that they are following the guidance and risk assessments in place at all times with regard to infection control practices. Adults not involved in the care of the children should not have entry to the playroom.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17)

4. The manager should regularly evaluate Infection Prevention and Control practices and recommence staff observations to help identify any required improvements.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

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

5. The manager should ensure risk assessments are developed for temporary supply staff working in the service.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event' (HSCS 4.14)

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	4 - Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	4 - Good
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	4 - Good

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