Murthly Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Murthly Primary School
Murthly
Perth
PH1 4HB

Telephone: 01738 454 263

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 May 2023

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003017339

About the service

Murthly Primary School Nursery is a day care for children provided by Perth and Kinross Council. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 24 children aged two years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service operates from a playroom within Murthly Primary School. Accommodation consists of one large play space shared with Primary one children, toileting facilities and a large garden area. The nursery is in a rural location near Murthly village in Perth and Kinross.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 May 2023 between 09:30 and 17:15. 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 ten people using the service and five of their family members
- Spoke with three staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Staff had developed meaningful relationships with children and families which supported children to thrive.

• The staff team worked well together to create an interesting and fun environment for children to play and learn.

• The shared playroom with Primary one children contributed positively to children's self-esteem and confidence.

• Children benefitted from very positive mealtime experiences.

• Staff should continue with their on going improvement work to enhance opportunities for language, literacy and numeracy in the nursery garden.

• The manager was highly knowledgeable on the importance of continuous improvement which supported the staff team to provide very 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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? 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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children received nurturing care and support from kind, caring and friendly staff who knew them extremely well. Staff valued children's voice and sensitively listened to their requests which told us that their views and opinions mattered. Children were effectively supported through well timed, and thoughtful interactions which contributed to their sense of security and promoted their overall wellbeing. We observed staff who skilfully provided reassurance, praised children, and offered cuddles and love when needed. They had high aspirations for the children they cared for. This resulted in children that had formed strong and trusting relationships with staff, which developed their sense of worth and enabled them to thrive.

A real strength of the service was their focus on supporting children's emotional resilience and nurturing children within calm environments. This was developed through staff training, participation in the Glasgow health and wellbeing tool and embedding the principles of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child within daily practice. Additionally, families were viewed as central to ensuring their children's wellbeing needs were met. Staff valued families as key partners in supporting their children to develop. Effective information sharing and very good personal planning linked to the wellbeing indicators meant children received consistent and compassionate care and support. This resulted in children that were safe, happy, and supported to reach their full potential. One parent told us, "my child talks excitedly about their nursery day, the staff know (child's name) so well, they are friendly, helpful and supportive, we love it here." Another parent told us, "you really get the sense that staff are actually listening to you."

Mealtimes were unhurried and sociable which strengthened attachments as staff sat and ate with children. They sensitively encouraged manners and promoted rich discussions on healthy eating. Children were offered plenty opportunities for developing independence and self-help skills as they used real crockery and cutlery and self-served using tongs. They confidently poured their own drinks, and decanted leftover food into a bin before rinsing their plates. We discussed with staff how more opportunities for responsibility could be provided. For example, children could be more involved in the planning and preparation of food. Overall, mealtimes were a very positive learning experience for children.

1.3. Play and learning

Children benefitted from a shared playroom with the Primary one class. They were curious and keen to learn as they mixed effortlessly together, having fun, and were engaged in their experiences. This approach ensured children were enthusiastic about their move into the school. One child told us, "it's lots of fun learning about things in the school." We found school children were kind, helpful and eager to help nursery children with more challenging tasks. For example, supporting younger children to handle worms and insects carefully, so as not to harm them. The inclusive environment was conducive to a playful and welcoming ambiance in which children confidently played and learned.

Language, literacy, and numeracy was very well supported within the indoor environment. Staff were committed to developing strategies learned from recent training which enhanced children's experiences. For example, interesting natural materials and loose parts were available in most areas of play. A focus on words

such as, metamorphosis and tenacity were used by staff and children during play which provided children with an understanding of the importance of recognising and reproducing words. Group times with older children, offered further fun experiences where numeracy and literacy were naturally embedded into the children's play and learning. As a result, their vocabulary and communication skills were being promoted and nursery children were gaining confidence and making progress. There was scope for language, literacy, and numeracy opportunities to be further developed within the outdoor environment. This had been identified by the service through their robust self-evaluation programme and was part of their on-going improvement work.

Staff empowered children to be successful and lead their own play and learning. This was demonstrated through floor books that were of a very high quality, time to talk sheets and a visible learning journey display. Responsive and intentional planning was complimented by staff that used highly effective questioning which ensured children extended their thinking and independently problem solved. These approaches enabled children to consolidate their learning and supported them to achieve their full potential.

Families were meaningfully engaged in their child's play, learning and development and supported well to ensure they thrived. For example, using their online digital platform families were provided with ideas and conversation starters on how they could help their children to achieve their next steps. Staff had thoughtfully considered the best way to meet each child's individual needs and how they could be supported at home to be successful. One parent told us, "staff clearly take care and attention when planning development opportunities for each child."

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefited from a shared playroom with the Primary one class that was clean, welcoming, and inviting. Natural furnishings and ceiling mobiles contributed to the calm and nurturing ambience. The playroom provided lots of natural light and ventilation and was organised in a way that effectively supported children's learning. There was a wealth of interesting resources and real-life experiences that promoted children's curiosity, investigation, and problem-solving skills. Snug and cosy areas were available throughout the environment which provided children with nurturing places to rest and relax. This enabled children to have a quiet space where they could have some individual time when needed and contributed to them feeling safe.

We found children engaged in their experiences as they moved seamlessly around play spaces. Their artwork, ideas and thoughts were displayed in a respectful way which contributed to them feeling valued and respected. The indoor environment was well thought out and supported quality play and learning experiences.

Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. For example, children were confident in their hand washing routines prior to eating and when coming in from playing in the outdoor area. This ensured children played in a safe and secure environment.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported as they had free flow access to the outdoors for fresh air and exercise. Children moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor spaces. The garden was an interesting

and exciting space for children to play. They explored, pedalled on bikes, climbed, and played cooperatively together digging a large hole, looking for insects. Children were very engaged at the kitchen area as they used different vessels to transport water and enthusiastically mixed materials together. One child told us, "look, I've put this in here which makes it difficult to mix."

Children were encouraged to learn about their natural surroundings. For example, they could view daily footage from a nature camera set up in a nature hide which captured wildlife in the neighbouring wood. We found children were confident in telling us about the nature that surrounded them. A large bell tent was used at the end of the session to gather the children for a story. We suggested other ways in which this structure could be used through the summer months. For example, adding soft furnishings would provide children with a comfy, cosy area outdoors where they could spend some quiet time independently if needed.

The outdoor environment was being reviewed to provide further opportunities for children to develop their dynamic play, curiosity, and imagination. Families were included in developments and had provided the service with larger loose parts which were in the process of being added to the outdoor play area. We agreed these additions would provide children with more opportunities to take positive risks in their play and promote their imagination, enquiry, and problem-solving skills further.

Children benefitted from staff who worked well together to remove potential risks to children. We heard staff use skilled questioning to effectively allow children to take positive risks during their play experiences. This resulted in children considering how best to keep themselves and others safe during play and contributed to the safe environment.

How good is our leadership? 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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Strong leadership had established very positive working relationships within the small staff team. They worked cohesively together, which created an ethos of mutual trust and respect between them. They were committed to improving outcomes and ensured they provided an inclusive environment. This resulted in a very happy, safe, and supportive environment for children and their families.

Staff, families, and their children had been involved in creating a shared vision for the setting. This supported effective partnership working where all stakeholders' views and contributions were respected and listened to.

There was a strong culture of improvement as the service took a variety of approaches to measure performance. The small staff team were committed to improving outcomes and could confidently tell of us of their roles and responsibility within improvement priorities. They regularly met with the manager and self-evaluated the provision they provided through continuous reflection in line with improvement plan objectives. Families were provided with a range of opportunities to spend time in the nursery through stay and play sessions and attending the Murthly Minis playgroup. During these sessions their views on service provision and development were actively sought. On returning to the nursery or during parent contact evenings, families could access QR codes to view how activities undertaken had improved outcomes. This meant that parents voices were valued and supported and promoted a shared understanding of progression

with improvement targets. A parent told us, "I feel fully informed and included on what is happening within the nursery."

Robust quality assurance processes allowed for meaningful opportunities for the manager and staff team to review and monitor various aspects of the service. For example, the manager routinely monitored staff practice, the environment, and mealtimes. This resulted in areas for improvement being identified, and actions taken by staff meant that they understood their role in improving experiences. Positive changes were made which resulted in very good outcomes for children and their families.

The manager and staff were well placed to achieve their ongoing improvement priorities to ensure children and families continue to experience care, play and learning that is of a very high standard.

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.

4.3. Staff deployment

Children were cared for by a staff team who were compassionate, friendly, and responsive to children's needs. There was a good mix of skills and knowledge within the experienced staff team who were committed to providing quality play and learning for children. They had worked hard to establish positive relationships, with each other, the children, and their families. This supported children to have fun, flourish and feel safe in the service. One parent told us, "the staff are lovely, they ensure my child is happy and I am grateful for that." Another parent told us, "the staff team is friendly and engaging with children and parents."

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff, consistently throughout the day. The management of staff shifts and breaks was seamless. This ensured appropriate staffing ratios met the needs of the children during busier times, such as lunchtime and the end of the nursery day, which contributed positively to children's safety.

Staff communicated well and worked effectively together to meaningfully support children's needs and preferences. Deployment of staff was supportive of children's free flow play and children who required additional support were very well supported by staff. This was enhanced through effective working relationships with families and resulted in children who felt respected and included in daily experiences.

Staff morale was high, and we found them to be reflective of their practice. Staff confidently told us how training, best practice documents and their role in service developments resulted in children receiving high quality support and experiences. They had created a very positive ethos which contributed to a professional workforce of staff who truly identified with the service.

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 the safety of children and staff when accessing the outdoor area, repairs should be carried out to the soft play surface.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

This area for improvement was made on 26 February 2019.

Action taken since then
Resurfacing of the play area was carried out.

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

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1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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