Rattray Early Childhood Centre
Day Care of Children

Rattray Primary School
High Street
Rattray
Blairgowrie
PH10 7DG

Telephone: 01250 871 980

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 December 2022

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003017342

About the service

Rattray Early Childhood Centre is located within the grounds of the primary school in Rattray, Perth and Kinross. It is close to local parks, shops and can accessed by local transport links.

Rattray Early Childhood Centre is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 74 children from aged two to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery operates from a new, purpose-built premises. Children have access to a large playroom, smaller playroom designated for the younger children and has direct access to a secure outdoor play space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 6 December 2022 between 09:30 and 17:15. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, 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
- spoke with two parents via telephone
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

• Children attending the service were happy, settled, having fun, and engaged in their play.
• All children experienced an unhurried and sociable mealtime.
• The service should review how they capture children's voice to inform planning.
• Children benefitted from a new, purpose, built premises which was safe, secure, and a well organised environment.
• The service should develop their use of loose parts and real, natural resources to further enhance opportunities for curiosity, enquiry, and imaginative play.
• Improvement planning should be streamlined to ensure priorities are relevant.
• The service should consider reviewing processes to consult with families.
• Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff who were committed to their role.
• Staff across the service worked well as a team and created a warm and welcoming atmosphere 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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy, settled, having fun, and engaged in their play. They experienced warm, nurturing care to support their well-being. Staff were kind and respectful towards children, taking time to listen and respond. Staff knew children well and interacted positively with them to support their needs. This helped children feel secure and contributed to the positive relationships they had with staff.

Children's wellbeing was supported through information gathered in various personal plan documents. Staff worked closely with families to ensure they had the right information to meet their needs. Staff demonstrated how well they knew children and were able to talk through strategies of support in place for individual children. However, we found personal plan information was not easily accessible to all staff. The service should continue to develop their personal planning approach to ensure that key information is accessible. This will further contribute to children receiving consistency and continuity in their care.

All children experienced an unhurried and sociable lunch time. Staff joined children at lunch, promoting meaningful conversations. This contributed to the sociable experience for children and allowed an opportunity for emerging language skills to be developed. For older children, there were some missed opportunities for choice and independence at lunch time. We discussed with the management team how this could be improved to allow children increased opportunities for self-service. This could improve children's independence skills and provide an element of choice at lunchtime. Children under three experienced a calm, nurturing lunch time where staff sat with younger children and sensitively encouraged them to try new foods. They supported children to self-serve and pour drinks. Children under three experienced a mealtime that was unhurried, sociable and strengthened attachments.

1.3 Play and learning

Children's play and learning was well supported during the inspection. Staff were responsive to children's requests in their play and intervened at appropriate times. Some staff used effective questioning to extend and develop children's individual learning. This supported children to be independent and confident in their play and learning.

Opportunities to play indoors and outdoors were available within spaces which were well-designed and considered. The free flow nature of the play space meant that all children could choose where to play which supported children's choice and independence in leading their play. Children accessed resources which supported their play experiences. However, we found limited use of real and natural resources, loose parts and objects of interest to effectively engage children's curiosity and challenge their thinking. We discussed with the management team ways in which this could be improved to ensure children's curiosity, enquiry and problem solving skills are supported at all times.

Children's language, literacy and numeracy was well supported across the nursery. Opportunities for emerging writing as well as counting, sorting and matching were available indoors and outdoors. This supported children to learn key skills through play experiences.

Children's ongoing learning and development was recorded in observations that were of a high quality and detailed significant learning and next steps which were relevant to individual children. As a result, children were supported individually to learn and progress. Planning approaches did not fully capture children's interests, thoughts and ideas. This meant that children did not experience depth in their learning. We discussed the importance of capturing children's voice through floorbooks to effectively inform planning within the service. This will contribute to children feeling respected, valued and enable them to make informed choices and lead their own play and learning by following their interests.

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 quality key question as very good.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from a new, purpose, built premises which was safe, secure, and a well organised environment. Indoors was furnished to a high standard and benefitted from space, natural light, and ventilation. The playrooms were decorated in neutral colours which created a homely, calm space. This helped the children feel safe, secure, and valued in the service.

The playroom was laid out in a manner which helped develop children's independence, resources were easily accessible to enable children to self-select items of their choice. Additionally, children's health and wellbeing was supported as they all had free flow access to the outdoors for fresh air and exercise. We saw children moved confidently and freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces which provided opportunities for active energetic play and enabled children to direct their play and learning.

The service had created inviting homely play spaces to meet children's needs, supporting them to have a strong sense of safety and understand that they matter. Children could access these freely, supporting them to be calm and have a place to rest and regulate their emotions. There was an area specifically dedicated to younger children, 'The Neuk'. We found, at times, children's play in 'The Neuk' was interrupted as adults passed through the space. When we returned to the service staff had been responsive to our suggestions of how this area could be enhanced which supported younger children to play uninterrupted.

Children and staff safety was promoted through risk assessments of environment and activities accessed by them. These were regularly reviewed, and staff were aware of their responsibility to identify and remove any new hazards.

Staff implemented infection, prevention, and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. We observed children being supported by staff to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing throughout the session. This included the use of songs and rhyme to encourage and engage younger children in hand washing routines. This contributed to keeping children safe and healthy.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A quality assurance calendar was in place that ensured audits of various aspects of the nursery were routinely carried out. As a result, changes were being made to improve areas within the service, this included developing planning approaches. We discussed with the management team how quality assurance processes could be enhanced. For example, observations with clear feedback given to staff or any actions identified could be recorded better. Reflecting on practice and recording progress would help drive forward improvements, and support children's experiences further.

Families had not yet been involved in a meaningful way to inform change. The service should now consider reviewing processes to consult with families. This would result in the views of families and children being valued in the development of the service.

Staff were involved in the self-evaluation of the service which supported them to be reflective in their practice. The service had used 'How Good Is our Early Learning and Childcare' as a foundation of their self-evaluation. We discussed with the management team ways in which they could further develop their self-evaluation process. This would contribute to building staff member's confidence in initiating change and improving outcomes for children.

A centre improvement plan was in place which had identified areas for development and allowed progress to be monitored. We discussed with the management team ways in which priorities could be more streamlined and take into account areas for development as identified within this report. For example, ensuring planning approaches reflect and support children's current interests and developing parental participation in a meaningful way.

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 quality key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Effective staff deployment within the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff, consistently throughout the day. The staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs which enhanced children's experiences and ensured children had the right support at the right time. Children who required additional support were well supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. This was enhanced through positive working relationships with families.

Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff who were committed to their role. Staff worked well together to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for children which supported a shared vision and a positive working ethos. Regular team meetings took place meaning that there were opportunities for information sharing between the staff team. Parents told us staff were friendly and approachable, parents comments included, "I trust staff with my child" and "the staff team are brilliant they are doing an amazing job". Staff's differing skills, knowledge and experience complimented one another and resulted in quality experiences for children.

Staff across the service worked well as a team, communicating effectively with each other to ensure the service ran well which resulted in continuity and consistency of children's care. For example, if a task took them away to support individual children, this was well managed to ensure children were supervised and 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?	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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