Melrose Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Melrose Primary School
Huntly Road
Melrose
TD6 9SB

Telephone: 01896 822 103

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 October 2023

Service provided by:
Scottish Borders Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001976

Service no:
CS2003017374

About the service

Melrose Primary School nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 54 children aged from 3 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of the 54 children aged from 3 years to not yet attending primary school no more than 24 children should attend the outdoor satellite setting. The service is situated in Melrose Primary School, based in the Scottish Borders close to local transport links, shops and other amenities.

The service provides indoor accommodation over two large rooms, which includes a kitchen area, toilets and a cloak room. It has its own small, secure outdoor space and children can also access the wider school grounds at certain times throughout the day.

A satellite service located within the school grounds allows a fully outdoor experience for 24 children who attend all day. Children have access to an enclosed wooded area, a shelter, camping toilets located in two small sheds and a welcome hut.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 November between 09:15 and 16:45 and and return visit on 27 November 2023 between 09:30 and 13:00. On the first day of inspection the visit was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate and one inspector returned the following day.

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
- received feedback from 11 families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were happy, settled, relaxed and cared for by nurturing and supportive staff.

- Improvements had been made to the satellite service that included further opportunities for children to access sheltered areas providing children with cosy spaces to relax.

- Play experiences across the nursery supported the development of children's play, development and learning.

- Quality assurance processes had been developed these now need to be embedded to ensure improvements are sustained.

- Deployment of staff across the settling was promoting children's wellbeing and supporting their overall play and learning.

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?	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 evaluated this quality indicator as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm, caring and nurturing in their approach with the children and knew the children well. One parent told us, 'The service is personal, the staff know the family and not just the child they provide care/ education for'. Children were happy and confident in approaching staff when they required help. Staff promoted children's independence throughout the day which resulted in confident and happy children.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through personal planning. Information recorded about children's family, medical needs and interests helped staff to provide individualised care. Staff were developing support strategies to ensure a consistent approach to helping children reach their full potential and keep them safe.

Children benefitted from high quality snack and lunchtime experiences which promoted opportunities to develop skills for life. For example, children helped prepared and serve their own snack indoors and at the satellite service. They experienced a calm, relaxed pace during mealtimes and were effectively supported by staff to be as independent as possible. Staff sat and ate with the child during snack and lunch which promoted good eating habits.

Children's medical needs were well understood by staff and reviewed regularly with parents and carers. Medication records were completed in line with the local authority guidelines. We suggested that more detailed information should be gathered around the signs, symptoms and procedures to be followed if a child does not respond to the medication. This would ensure children are kept safe.

Accidents and incidents were appropriately recorded and shared with parents. Regular reflection and auditing of accidents and incidents with the staff team identified and raised awareness of potential risks. Children were supported to be safe through staff having assessed and eliminated potential risks.

1.3: Play and Learning

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children

Children were having fun, whilst learning and developing their skills. The management team were implementing literacy and numeracy trackers that supported depth and breadth into children's learning. We observed children having opportunities to count, draw, read and mark make which met with children's interests. This meant staff were facilitating learning opportunities through play that supported children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Children's progress was supported by staff that were consistent in their approach to play and learning. They understood the importance of play and the need for children to learn at their own pace, and in their own way. Praise and encouragement promoted children's self-esteem and continued achievement. Staff interactions supported children to extend their vocabulary using effective commentary and open-ended questions. They gave children plenty of time to think and respond which enabled them to process

information and make decisions.

Tracking individual children through observations and weekly 'focus children' meant staff were knowledgeable about each child's age and stage of development. Staff were supported to improve their skills around observing children to track and monitor their progress. Individual development and achievements were shared with families through an online platform and staff were developing next steps for some children. The management team were developing staff's confidence around the planning systems to ensure children's learning and development was evaluated and progressing well. Parents commented: "my child enjoys attending, they share observations made and offer fun learning opportunities", "Staff are really friendly and open and seem to have really good bonds with the children" and "From hearing from our son, seeing updates on Showbie and visiting nursery for Stay and Play's, the children seem to have a good variety of activities and experiences on offer to them".

Planning ensured that experiences offered to children met their development needs and interests. Staff commented that they felt the "in the moment" planning was going well. Senior management were evaluating the planning approach to ensure it was child centred, supported children's interests, and responded to children's life experiences. A parent commented "Children are listened to and the ideas for play often reflected in what they find interesting and want to learn about at that time" and "We are very happy with the range of activities there is offered for our child".

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children experienced a setting that was welcoming, well furnished and comfortable with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Soft lighting in one area of the playroom created a cosy and nurturing space. Children were able to rest and relax on a comfortable sofa or retreat to a den. As a result, children experienced a homely environment.

Improvements had been made to the satellite service that included cosier areas and further shelter options. Staff should continue to evaluate these areas to ensure children are warm and comfortable. Contingency plans must be in place to ensure there is adequate lighting within the area. Most parents agreed that their children were happy to attend the satellite service. However, others commented that their children were unhappy attending the satellite service especially during the colder months, and they should have access to further shelter and resources. During the inspection when children requested to go inside, staff accommodated this. We have asked that staff remain vigilant to children's wellbeing needs especially during extreme weather conditions. Further information should be shared with parents to ensure they are aware of the procedure around supporting children who attend satellite service.

The indoor and outdoor environments were developmentally appropriate spaces with interesting, exciting, and stimulating resources. This included a wide variety of loose parts, open-ended materials and real life resources which promoted children's curiosity and imagination. Spaces and resources reflected children's current interests and curiosities. As a result, most children were engaged in their play throughout the day.

The satellite service allowed children to immerse themselves in nature and to explore and investigate the outdoor setting. For example, children were having fun in the mud kitchen, carving pumpkins and using

natural resources to create pictures and models. Children were happy and content to be outside. Staffing within the satellite service meant that children's and staff's wellbeing was a priority to the senior management team. The additional staff member also meant that children's individual play and learning was enhanced.

Play equipment and resources were easily accessible for children which promoted their independence and gave them the opportunity to lead their learning. The room layout and resources were carefully thought out which enhanced children's experiences.

Infection prevention and control procedures were observed, and risk assessments robustly completed to help ensure children's safety. Registers were used to record when children entered and left the setting especially when visiting the satellite service. Staff should continue to ensure children wash their hands at appropriate times, especially in the outdoor setting. Attention should be paid to the cleaning or renewal of the floor coverings in the indoor setting, these were not attractive and stained with dough and paint. We have asked the service to ensure that nappy changing and toileting both indoors and outside are reviewed, and changes made if necessary.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

We acknowledged that staff and management had worked hard to make some meaningful improvements to the setting, which were having a positive impact on children and their families. We were able to see progress made in relation to areas identified for improvement and their impact. It was clear through discussions with the team, observations of practice and review of various documentation that a significant number of improvements had been made to the service. The service should now start to embed self evaluation into practice and ensure sustained improvement. Staff were skilled, motivated, and a shared value base meant that they worked well together. Regular opportunities to have professional discussion and continuously reflect on practice brought about positive changes to outcomes for children and families.

The improvement plan identified focus areas for development across the service. The priorities within the plan were being evaluated to ensure outcomes for children remained positive. The service should continue to develop the quality assurance systems and processes and formalise the impact of these systems on outcomes for children.

Staff recognised the important part they each played in meeting the needs of children and families. They recognised one another's strengths and felt supported by the leadership team. The management team had a dedicated principle teacher with the remit of building and sustaining improvements within the nursery. A robust relationship has been built between the senior team and staff which is supporting self evaluation and sustained improvements across the setting.

Children's voices were valued in the service. Opportunities for children to share their ideas and influence their learning was part of daily experiences. Through observations of play and daily discussions, staff responded to children's interests and suggestions. This resulted in children being respected and valued.

Families shared with us that overall, they were happy with their level of involvement in the setting. The

service had welcomed parents back into the setting and had offered "stay and play" sessions. Some parents expressed that they did not feel fully involved and informed about their child's learning and development and handover times were rushed. The service should continue to evaluate the ways in which they consult with families to ensure it is meaningful and effective.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children

4.3: Staff deployment

Staff worked well together, and this created a positive environment for children in which they felt safe and secure. Staff knew children's individual needs well and this shared approach ensured that children were supported to achieve their potential. Parents commented "the staff of the ELC are excellent and the headteacher is very involved", "the ELC manager is very good", "keyworkers in groups are brilliant - trusted and key role models for my children" and "The staff work very hard and we are very grateful to them to support the learning and care of our child".

The deployment of staff had been reviewed and the additional staff member in the satellite service, had a positive impact on the staff and children. Staff were available to support children in their play, learning and other activities that meant the smooth running of this area. It also meant staff's wellbeing was recognised and valued. The service had also reviewed the deployment of staff within the service. Staff were now responsible on a two-week rotation for areas within the service. This provided time for the staff to undertake meaningful observations of the children and provide suitable resources to develop the children's play, learning and development.

Staff were committed to their professional development and had participated in learning that had improved children's experiences. The management team should begin to support staff in their professional development through the re-establishing professional development review. This would ensure staff were undertaking training that would develop their own skills and expertise as well as meet the priorities within the service. This will support high quality care for all children in 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 children's health and welfare there should be more cosy, nurturing protective structures and spaces available for children to sleep and rest comfortably when shelter from the weather is needed.
This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:
5.17: My environment is secure and safe.

5.21 I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices.

This area for improvement was made on 11 May 2022.

Action taken since then

The service had made various changes to the satellite service that included providing more spaces that allowed children to rest comfortably. This included tents with thermal ground sheets, more tarpaulin shelters and various blankets and sleeping bags.

This area for improvement is met.

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	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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