Stow Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Station Road
Stow
Galashiels
TD1 2SQ

Telephone: 01578 730 218

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 February 2023

Service provided by:
Scottish Borders Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001976

Service no:
CS2003017382

About the service

Stow Primary School Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 34 children, aged from two years to not yet of an age to attend primary school, at any one time. Of those 34, no more than five are aged two years.

The named manager is the manager of Fountainhall Primary School Nursery CS2003016101.

The nursery is an integral part of Stow Primary School in a rural village in the Scottish Borders. The nursery premises includes a playroom with toilet facilities and kitchen area. Children can access the outdoor play area directly from the playroom. Children use facilities within the school for meals and indoor physical activities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 31 January 2023 between 09:15 and 15:45. We gave feedback on 2 February 2023. 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 and four of their family members
- spoke with the staff team and management
- observed staff practice and daily experiences for children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The setting was warm and welcoming.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing care from staff which helped them feel happy, secure and safe.
- Children were having fun leading their own play and learning.
- Staff were committed to their roles and proactive in their professional development to support positive outcomes for children.
- Children had sustained opportunities for outdoor play to promote their health and wellbeing.
- The management team and staff should further include families in the self evaluation and improvement of the service to secure better 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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and having fun in their play, and benefited from warm and nurturing care from staff. They were familiar with the routines of the day which helped them feel settled within the nursery. Parents told us they were happy with the care provided for their children and comments we received included, "I feel very lucky that my child gets to attend this inclusive environment with this encouraging and positive staff" and "I absolutely love this nursery, my child is very happy (the most important thing) which tells me they are getting things right."

Children's emotional wellbeing was promoted and friendships were supported through play. At times staff sensitively supported children to understand and express their emotions as well as understand the emotions of others. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure within their environment.

Effective use of gathering personal information helped to support children's overall wellbeing. Staff demonstrated how well they knew the children and were able to talk through strategies of support in place for individual children. These were recorded in partnership with parents and contributed to children receiving consistency and continuity in their care. Parents were kept informed about children's experiences and needs by various methods. One parent told us, "Almost everyday on homeroom, (staff) post photos of the activities and children. As parents these things are so important to help us feel connected."

Medication was stored in line with best practice guidance and relevant information and permissions had been gathered from parents. We discussed with staff that an additional stepped approach should be included in the event of medication being ineffective.

Mealtimes provided children with a positive and social experience. Snacktime was held outdoors under a covered area of the garden. Children were encouraged to be independent through self serving and making their own choices. They told us they enjoyed outdoor eating and "sitting with friends." Lunchtime took place in the school dining hall and a 'helper' each day set up cutlery and drinks with staff. This promoted confidence, self-esteem and responsibility. Staff sat with children and encouraged meaningful conversations and promoted healthy eating habits. This helped to develop and strengthen their social skills and language development.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning.

Children benefited from opportunities for freely chosen and planned play experiences. They were actively leading their own play and learning, engaged with resources which supported their interests. Staff showed enthusiasm in their interactions with children, providing resources and experiences to support their learning. These included large bricks, construction play, arts and crafts, and small world play.

Staff supported children in their play, helping them to problem solve and access a variety of learning experiences. Children were supported to develop their language and numeracy skills through conversations with the staff team. We saw children having fun counting down numbers during a 'rocket launch' activity.

Floor books had been used to record children's experiences and capture their voices. This supported staff to identify and plan future learning, however, these had not been updated for several months. We discussed the need to ensure these were kept updated. This would provide children with further opportunities to share their opinions and shape their own experiences.

Parents received regular information and observation sheets of children's experiences and one parent told us, "We are asked to contribute to this by sharing any aspects or areas of learning and sharing anything new at home or any developmental achievements." It was also shared by some parents it would be helpful to include developmental goals. This would support a shared understanding of children's individual progress.

Healthy lifestyles were promoted through regular active physical play and fresh air. The woodland area had a range of activities and provided opportunities for climbing, balancing, and swinging. Staff supported a risk benefit approach. This helped children to learn about boundaries and assess their own play in a safe secure environment.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a welcoming and well maintained learning environment. The playroom was bright and attractively laid out with a range of resources arranged for children to access themselves. Free flow to the garden was available in all weathers.

Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. Staff understood the importance of keeping the setting clean and supported children to wash their hands at appropriate times such as before mealtimes or after toileting . This meant that children were protected from the potential spread of infection.

Children were kept safe as staff were always vigilant about accounting for children. They ensured doors to the setting were secured appropriately when children were arriving or leaving the setting with parents, and risk assessments were in place.

The layout of the room and resources ensured that children could move around freely and access additional resources for their play independently. Children were mixing colours in the art area and told us they were making "pink" and at the tinkering table a child was "fixing things." These activities provided opportunities for experimentation and exploration. Children engaged in singing activities spontaneously and in a planned way through the rhyme of the week. We discussed the lack of musical instruments within the nursery. Staff told us they were available to children on request, however, they were in the process of identifying a designated area for instruments to be more ready available for children.

Children had access to daily outdoor play that provided a range of resources to develop their imagination and curiosity including core resources of water and sand. The woodland area known by children as the "yurt place" provided a range of physical opportunities, and we saw children swinging on hammocks and rolling tyres down the hill. The house area which was outdoors did not look inviting and contained mainly plastic resources. We discussed with staff they should introduce more natural and real life items. This would increase opportunities to develop skills in understanding, imagination and problem solving.

Information about children was kept securely on the local authority computer system. Paper documents such as personal plans were kept securely in a locked cabinet. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed the information to meet children's needs. Information about children and their families was kept in a safe and secure manner in line with general data protection regulations (GDPR).

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Leadership roles in the nursery were defined and the early years officer provided day to day leadership to the nursery team. The principal teacher held a designated role of senior responsibility for the nursery. The headteacher provided a more strategic support due to the peripatetic nature of her post.

Information was shared with parents regularly and one parent told us, "parents are asked for their opinions on things in the nursery and I always feel I can talk to the staff openly about anything." This demonstrated parents views were valued and their opinions mattered.

The current improvement plan was based on an action plan of key priorities identified at the previous inspection. This should be further developed to include identified key areas for the ongoing improvement and development of the service. This should be shared with parents as they told us they were unaware of the current improvement plan.

Policies and procedures were in place to support safe practice within the service, and risk assessments had been reviewed and updated.

Team meetings provided staff with opportunities to keep them informed about all aspects of nursery life. These opportunities enabled them to discuss individual children and share their ideas on what was working well in the playrooms and what could be improved.

Quality assurance processes were in place which helped support the monitoring and development of the service. To further evaluate performance, the manager and staff should continue to familiarise themselves with 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school-aged childcare.'

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 4.3 Staff deployment

The staff team worked well together, sharing tasks throughout the day. They communicated clearly with each other when leaving areas or taking children to other parts of the setting. As a result, children were effectively and safely supervised. They confirmed that they felt supported within the nursery, however, would benefit from more structured support from the management team.

Parents comments included, "the team go above and beyond to really know all of the children, and also to engage and involve parents too" and "I see (staff) working above and beyond to make the nursery the best it can be, and (staff) is lucky to also have such an experienced and kind team there too."

The service was effectively staffed to meet the needs of children. There was sufficient staff to meet minimum ratios throughout the day which met children's care and support needs. Planned breaks were managed well, ensuring children continued to have positive experiences. This meant that children received consistent care and support throughout the day. Staff were flexible in moving between indoors and outdoors to support children's play and ensure appropriate supervision at all times. They engaged with children at their level and were responsive to their cues, contributing to children's enjoyment and positive experiences.

There was a good mix of knowledge and skills across the staff team which promoted children's safety and wellbeing. Staff spoke about their individual areas of interests such as outdoor learning, and we saw staff had taken the lead in sharing their learning with others. This included the introduction of sewing and threading which promoted fine motor skills, creativity, curiosity, and challenge.

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 strengthen processes in place to support children, staff should ensure that where a child needs a strategy to support elements of their development, these are clearly documented, agreed with parents, and monitored regularly to assess progress.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 10 March 2022.

Action taken since then

Support strategies had been added for children requiring additional support in partnership with parents. These were evidenced and demonstrated in practice through the interactions between staff and children..

Previous area for improvement 2

To provide children with mealtimes which support a meaningful social experience, where staff effectively monitor food intake and engage in social interaction with children, staff should review and further improve the mealtime procedure.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate good practice guidance: 'Food Matters, nurturing happy, healthy children.'

This area for improvement was made on 10 March 2022.

Action taken since then

Mealtime experiences had been improved, and staff sat with children encouraging meaningful conversation and promoting healthy lifestyles. Children were encouraged to self-serve and clear their dishes, supporting their independence and responsibilities.

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	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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