Armadale Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Academy Street
Armadale
Bathgate
EH48 3JD

Telephone: 01501 730 282

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 April 2024

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003017485

About the service

Armadale Primary School Nursery is situated in a residential area of West Lothian. The service operates within the grounds of Armadale Primary School. Children have access to a designated entry area, large playroom, a fully enclosed outside area and children's toilets. A small kitchen area is used for the storage and preparation of snacks.

The service is provided by West Lothian Council and is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 60 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time of whom no more than 10 are aged 2 years to under 3 years.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 May 2024, between 9:30 and 18:00 and 17 May 2024 between 8:00 and 12:00. Feedback was given at the end of the second inspection visit. 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 a number of children using the service
- spoke with and gathered feedback from families
- spoke with management and staff
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing care and respectful interactions.
- Children were empowered to lead their play and learning.
- Children's individual interests and development were supported well.
- Play spaces were well structured, enabling choice and free movement.
- Staff worked well together to meet children's individual needs.
- Staff promoted children's rights through high quality play and learning experiences.
- The service promoted a culture of continual improvement.

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.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing and compassionate care throughout their day. Warm and respectful interactions supported children to feel safe and well cared for. Positive relationships and attachments with staff contributed to children feeling happy and secure in the service.

Staff listened to children and sensitively responded to their individual cues when seeking comfort and reassurance. Children were skilfully supported to explore and express their emotions. Tools such books, emotion spoons and photographs encouraged children's learning of different emotions. Gentle discussions with staff promoted their understanding of their own feelings and those of others. This supported children to feel emotionally secure and resulted in a positive and friendly environment.

Personal care was sensitively supported and promoted children's independence, privacy and dignity. Staff were respectful of children's wishes throughout these experiences.

Staff knew the children well and continually gathered important information to help them provide the right level of care and support. Positive working with families and other professionals contributed to the development of effective strategies when additional support was needed. This promoted continuity of care and supported children to flourish and remain settled in the setting. Staff confidently spoke about children's individual development and how they were supporting continued achievement and progression. Management were supporting staff to strengthen the level of information recorded in personal support plans. This included enhanced detailing of identified next steps to support individual planning. This will also enable families to fully see the support provided to their child. Families made positive comments about their inclusion in developing personal plans and the information shared about their child's development.

Various methods were place for sharing information with families about their child. This included online personal plans, daily chats and electronic newsletters. Two families commented they would like more information about their child's general day, for example foods eaten and activities they have taken part in. The service should consider these comments.

Mealtimes were a positive and sociable experience. Children were given time to relax and enjoy their meals. Snacks and lunches were nutritionally balanced, encouraging children to make healthy eating choices. Staff sat with children and used the opportunity to promote language and communication through meaningful conversations. Children's independence was encouraged as they collected their own glasses, plates and cutlery, self served foods and drink and washed their own dishes. Children's health and wellbeing was promoted with easy access to drinking water. This encouraged them to remain hydrated throughout their day.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun indoors and outside. They freely explored the wide range of experiences on offer which promoted choice and creativity. Children were busy and purposeful in their play. They were curious and asked questions, staff responded through shared interactions contributing to children's learning and understanding. This also provoked children's continued interest and challenge.

Children were actively leading their play and learning through a balance of planned and freely chosen activities. Staff valued children's right to play and carefully captured their interests and voice within the planning and daily provisions. Staff's understanding of child development and differing learning approaches successfully promoted children' s engagement in their play and continued enjoyment. Floor books also captured children's voice and contributed to planning as staff gathered information about what children wanted to learn. Children were supported to revisit activities and reflect on their learning.

Children's enjoyment of numeracy and literacy was promoted and enhanced through books, displays and easy accessed resources which children naturally selected within their play. For example, a child carried a tape measure around to measure various items including a ball, wooden bricks and tyres. Children enjoyed looking at books together and listening to stories. This helped children to continually build on their learning in a fun way.

Children were supported well to communicate their wants and needs. Staff skilfully listened to them and responded quickly to their individual requests. Children were enabled to communicate in a way that met their individual needs and preferences. This promoted an inclusive environment and demonstrated to children they mattered, and their contributions were valued.

Risky play opportunities such as woodwork and creating structures to walk on with wood and tyres promoted further challenge. These activities gave children control, promoted assessment and decision making and gave them a sense of achievement as they successfully completed their plan.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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.

Children experienced a welcoming, well maintained and inviting environment. Furnishings were comfortable and appropriate to the children in attendance. The indoor and outdoor environments were creatively structured to take account of children's current interests and
stages of development. They were well resourced with high quality materials that supported children's curiosities, play and learning. As a result, children engaged in play for sustained periods of time.

Calm and comfortable areas gave children space to rest, relax, sleep and be on their own if they chose to. This enabled them to set their own pace of day.

Children and family's personal information was securely stored to ensure their privacy and dignity. Information was accessible to relevant staff whilst remaining confidential. Children remained safe with access to the premises being monitored through a secure entry system and appropriate staff supervision in the outside area.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted through effective infection prevention and control practice. Hand washing took place at key times throughout the day. Children were confident in this practice, and it was evident this routine which was embedded.

Staff had embraced the Care Inspectorate's Keeping children safe - SIMOA campaign (safe, inspect, monitor, observe, act). They had effectively used this to support children's learning of keeping themselves and others safe. Children excitedly told us about SIMOA the soft toy elephant who watches them to keep them safe. They showed us pictures of the elephant at each exit area and stated, "We don't go out the doors on our own".

Children's safety was further promoted as relevant risk assessments and maintenance procedures were implemented. Staff's knowledge and practice demonstrated a sound understanding of their responsibilities of keeping children safe. A recent review of the garden area had led to positive changes to promote continued play in a safe environment. To further develop children's learning of keeping themselves and others safe, they could be given enhanced opportunities to be involved in undertaking the daily risk assessments.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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.

Staff and management's shared vision of what was important in the service meant children were valued as individuals and supported well to develop, achieve and continue enjoying their early learning and childcare experience.

Leaders supported staff to have high aspirations for children and families. The newly developed vision, values and aims were created in consultation with staff, children and families. This demonstrated an inclusive setting which strived to provide the best outcomes for children and families in their community.

Positive communication and good relationships between the leadership team and staff meant staff were fully involved in developing the future direction of the service. They worked well together to build a reflective culture and continuous improvement that promoted positive outcomes for children.

The current improvement plan included a focus on children's rights, their wellbeing, play and learning. This put children at the heart of the service. The improvements were led well, continually assessed and positively impacted the development of rich experiences for children. The improvement journey was shared with families. This gave them an opportunity to reflect on the service experienced by their children and make comments and suggestions.

Staffs' contributions were valued and played a significant part in the development of the service. Leadership roles based on their individual skills and interests promoted a motivated team with a clear passion to secure positive outcomes for children.

Quality assurance systems were working well and contributed to a professional team and high quality experiences for children. This included regular monitoring of staff skills, practice, children's learning and experiences and various other important aspects of the service. Some families' comments indicated they would like more opportunities to express their views and be involved in the service. The leadership team should consider these comments and review the current opportunities in place.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

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.

Children benefitted from a passionate, caring and reflective staff team with a range of differing skills and knowledge. Staff supported each other well, sharing learning and encouraging professional development. This promoted an inclusive work force who worked together well to share ideas and enhance daily experiences for children.

The culture of respect and support meant that staff received mentoring and guidance at a pace that was right for them. Staff told us they felt empowered, valued and were supported well by the senior leadership team.

The level of staffing and effective deployment across the play areas was managed well to ensure appropriate supervision. This also meant staff were visually available for children and able to meet their immediate needs. Staff communicated well throughout the day, sharing tasks and responsibilities. As a result, children's play was uninterrupted, promoting continued engagement in play.

Staff were proactive in maintaining their individual learning relevant to their roles within the service. A current focus for all staff was developing a sound knowledge of children's rights and promoting these in everyday practice and children's experiences. This contributed to children being empowered, involved in making decisions about their care and support and encouraged them to develop a strong sense of self identity.

Children's risk of harm was reduced as staff were confident about safeguarding procedures and wider issues which may affect families and quickly communicated concerns to the relevant agencies. This contributed to children's continued wellbeing and safety.

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?	5 - Very Good
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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