Blackridge Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Blackridge Primary School
Main Street
Blackridge
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Telephone: 01501 751 223

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 November 2022

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003017487

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About the service

Blackridge Primary School Nursery is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 61 children aged from two years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. With no more than five children aged two to under three.

The service is provided by West Lothian Council to provide early learning and childcare to children and is located in Blackridge, West Lothian. Situated on the grounds of Blackridge Primary School, the service is housed in a self-contained building. The setting consists of one large playroom and a smaller nurture room. There is an enclosed outdoor play area, which has direct access from the playroom. In addition to the outdoor play space, there is a larger enclosed grassed area and plans are in place to add a gate so that children will also be able to access this space independently. The service is close to local shops and parks. It is serviced by good transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 November 2022 between 10:00 and 17:00 and on 30 November 2022 between 09:30 and 14:30. 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
- spoke to four staff and management
- spoke to two parents and heard from two parents via email
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Feedback was given to the service at the end of the second visit between 14:30 and 15:30.

Key messages

All children benefited from loving and nurturing care from staff who knew and respected their needs and wishes.

Staff would benefit from being mentored and encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge.

A relaxed flow to the day gave children time and space to play. They chose what to play with and moved around the space confidently accessing what they needed.

Children benefited from a new build setting, which provided plenty of natural light, warmth and comfort which enhanced their wellbeing.

Children and families' views about changes within the service were valued.

Management should consider how they can support the formation of a stable staff team who work effectively together to contribute to quality improvement at a good pace.

There was a culture of respect, inclusion and support for all children, and families which helped them to feel secure and valued.

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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as a number of important strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

All children benefited from loving and nurturing care from staff who knew and respected their needs and wishes. Children were settled, relaxed and learning though play. There was a culture of respect, inclusion, and support for all children, which helped them to feel secure and valued.

Snack and mealtimes were calm, unhurried social experiences. Food choices were nutritious, reflected current best practice guidance and were appropriate for children's individual cultural and dietary needs. Fresh water was available throughout the day and children were encouraged to remain hydrated. Healthy alternatives were given if children did not like what was on offer and independence skills were promoted as children self-served their own food and poured their own drink. Supportive staff sat with children and role modelled good table manners and encouraged them to try the healthy food options available. This supported children to develop life-long life skills and healthy eating habits. The rich conversations at lunch time helped children to develop language and social skills. We asked parents if they were satisfied with the food provided and if they had been consulted about the menu. One parent told us, "The snacks and meals are great, and my child seems to eat well there, I am asked everyday what they would like for lunch."

Staff spoke knowledgably and confidently about children's individual care needs and what they did to support them. As a result, individual children received care and support that was right for them. Moving forward staff should improve the quality and consistency of recording individual care needs and support strategies. For example, each child had a personal plan in place, however some plans were missing the key information required to meet children's care, learning and wellbeing needs. Strategies of support were in place for most children. Staff now need to ensure that recorded strategies are in place for all children based on individual needs. Similarly, evaluation of strategies should be documented and discussed as a whole staff team to promote continuity of care that meets children's needs.

Staff worked proactively with children, families, and other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to identify strategies to support children, based on individual needs. Children's plans identified next steps in learning. Improved communication within the staff team would ensure that consistent approaches were being used to help children who required additional support. For example, children who would benefit from visual aids. This would give all children the opportunities to reach their full potential.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

A relaxed flow to the day gave children time and space to play. They chose what to play with and moved around the space confidently accessing what they needed. This promoted independence and a sense of freedom to follow their own ideas.

A range of play opportunities supported children's developing skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Children were enjoying playing the game 'What's the time Mr Wolf', counting out their steps which helped to consolidate their confidence, counting and social skills.

The environment was rich in print and children's writing. This encouraged children to interact with print and text independently. Digital technology skills were supported by using QR codes (Quick Response Codes). Children used these codes with adult support in different areas of the nursery to scan and access interesting information linked to their learning.

Staff had a good understanding of child development, relevant theory, and practice. This contributed to the play and learning experiences offered to children. Moving forward, staff planned to develop their skills when recording children's individual learning. This would enable them to plan experiences, with more focus on supporting children's specific next steps to further enhance the progression in learning at a particularly good pace. For example, some children would benefit from being challenged more in their learning to help them to try out new ideas, solve problems and persevere at tasks. Parents recognised the progression their children were making because of attending the service and one parent said, "My child has come on a lot with drawing, singing songs, and is chattier."

Children were being supported to develop their woodwork skills using child sized real tools. They were being given opportunities to make their own choices and learn through trial and error. By successfully making creations and resolving their own challenges, children were also supported to develop self-esteem and confidence.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as a number of important strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience quality facilities

Children benefited from a new build setting, which provided plenty of natural light, warmth and comfort which enhanced their wellbeing. The high-quality facilities were clean and well maintained to keep children safe and healthy. Changing rooms and the rainbow nurture room offered spaces for children to receive personal care and extra support with privacy, dignity, and respect.

The playroom provided a free flow feel across all areas and into the outdoors. The outdoor space was designed to support children to be curious and engage in play, reflecting current interests and children's developmental needs. This created a stimulating outdoor experience that promoted play and learning. Children could choose lengthy periods of uninterrupted outdoor play, which supported them to be active and contributed to their overall wellbeing. Adjacent to the outdoor play space was a larger natural grassed environment. Plans were in place for a gate to be installed to allow children to independently access the larger outdoor space. This would offer increased daily opportunities and freedom for children to run and to engage in open ended and appropriate risk-taking play.

Most of the indoor spaces were beautifully presented and accessible to invite and entice children to play, which gave a clear message to children that they mattered. For example, sharpened colouring pencils sorted into coloured tubs, paint bottles that children could help themselves to as they wished. Shelves situated beside the water tray housed an assortment of funnels, buckets, measuring jugs and scoops. There was a sink beside the water tray where children could transport water to and from the running tap using buckets and jugs. As a result, children were being introduced to maths and scientific concepts whilst developing concentration, focus and sensory exploration skills.

Other play areas within the playroom were not so well resourced and required to be replenished or improved. This included the home corner, which lacked the range of play materials for children to be able to engage in rich role play. For example, there were not enough resources for children to pretend make, serve or eat a meal. This limited opportunities for children to act out scenarios and make sense of situations they come across in real life.

The service should consider creating a cosy, sensory space within the playroom for children to have a quiet space alone for relaxing with a friend. Such spaces can help to soothe a distressed child and support children to develop positive wellbeing.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as a number of important strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The vision of the service had recently been reviewed and refreshed in consultation with children and families. This meant that the vision remained relevant to the community within the service.

Children and families' views about changes within the service were valued. Families had been consulted about the values and about the new building prior to them moving in. There was scope to continue to enrich this good practice through continued consultation. This would ensure that all families felt valued and were included in making important decisions about their child's provision.

The management team were clear about the strengths and areas for improvement of the service. The improvement plan identified key priorities and action points. The plans reflected the needs of the service and set out how outcomes for children should improve. For example, an identified priority was to continue to support staff as they used West Lothian Council trackers and early level progression pathways as tools to identify and plan appropriate, next steps in learning for individual children. This would support all children to develop and learn at a pace which is right for them.

Management were effectively using quality framework documents to benchmark the service and identify areas for improvement. As a result, some improvement had been made which impacted on better outcomes for children. For example, children were now self-serving their own snacks and meals to develop independence skills.

Changes within the staff team had resulted in planned improvements not progressing at the anticipated pace. Moving forward, management should consider how they can support the formation of a stable staff team who work effectively together to contribute to quality improvement at a good pace. This would result in an enhanced quality provision to further promote children's development and learning.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as a number of important strengths outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed during the day was recognised by management as essential to the wellbeing of children in the service. Staffing arrangements supported effective transitions to ensure continuity of care for children across the day. Staff breaks were planned effectively to minimise disruption and busy periods of the day, such as lunch times, were supported. This ensured staff were able to take rest breaks while enough staff were still available to meet children's needs.

There was a range of skill and experience across the staff team. Some staff had received training to enhance approaches for supporting children to learn through play. For example, one staff member's training had enhanced opportunities for children to develop emerging literacy skills.

Moving forward, staff would benefit from being mentored and encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge. The good range of professional development and networking opportunities delivered by West Lothian Council would support their development journey. This would encourage staff to commit to leadership roles and enhance effective deployment of skilled staff to improve consistent high-quality outcomes for children. Parents appreciated the support that staff gave to their children and told us, "The staff are doing a fantastic job, my child is always excited to go to his nursery class."

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

We recommend that the service review, monitor and evaluate their approaches to accident and incident reporting. Reports should be consistent and detailed to allow the service to reflect on reducing risks to children's safety in the nursery.

Systems should be implemented to ensure parents and carers are informed of any accidents and incidents on the day of the event. This would allow staff to advise and guide families to ensure children's wellbeing is maintained when they have left the service as well.

This will ensure children are kept safe and healthy in the service.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14 - Well-Managed Service.

This area for improvement was made on 20 March 2017.

Action taken since then

This recommendation was met. Accident and incident reporting was consistent and detailed to allow the service to reflect on reducing risks to children's safety in the nursery. Systems had been implemented to ensure that parents and carers were informed of any accidents and incidents on the day of the event.

Previous area for improvement 2

We recommend that the service review and evaluate their approaches to risk assessment to include the potential risks identified by behaviours and actions of children. This should also include the actions taken to reduce this risk to ensure strategies are used by the team.

This will ensure children are kept safe and healthy in the service.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14 - Well-Managed Service

This area for improvement was made on 20 March 2017.

Action taken since then

This recommendation was met. The service had reviewed and evaluated their approaches to risk assessment to include the potential risks identified by behaviours and actions of children. Staff had clear strategies in place to keep children and each other safe.

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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