Benarty Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Benarty Primary School
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Lochore
Lochgelly
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Telephone: 01592 583 412

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 January 2023

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003040355

About the service

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

Benarty Primary School Nursery is a Fife Council education provider, providing a day care service for a maximum of 44 children at any one time, age from three years to an age to attend primary school. The service operates from one playroom, within the primary school building and is situated in the town of Lochore with nearby local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 25 January 2023 between 08:30 and 16:45. 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:
- spent time with the children using the service
- spoke with or received emails from six of their family members
- spoke with staff members and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Staff worked very well together as a team, creating a warm and welcoming environment.
• Relationships between staff and children were very nurturing and supportive and strong attachments had been formed between children and staff.
• Parents had regular opportunities to come into the setting and be part of their children's learning.
• Children benefited from a reflective staff team who were dedicated to continuous professional learning.
• The service should continue to develop the lunch time to ensure opportunities for children to develop independence skills.
• Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them very well.
• Strong leadership resulted in staff who had high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential.

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 quality theme as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing, compassionate and responsive care. Interactions between children and staff were respectful, supporting children to feel safe and well cared for. Strong attachments with staff contributed to children remaining very happy and relaxed in the service. For example, children were observed to look for their key worker and were proud to share their achievements with them. As a result, children were provided with reassurance which contributed to positive attachments being formed and supported them to feel loved.

Children were well supported to communicate their wants and needs. Staff skilfully listened to them and responded quickly to their individual requests and cues. 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.

Staff promoted children's independence very well and in a thoughtful manner throughout most of the day. For example, children were encouraged to wash their dishes after snack times, help prepare snack and take off and put on their shoes themselves. As a result, children were confident and independent.

Children experienced unhurried and caring support at meal and snack times. Staff recognised daily routines provided a rich opportunity to promote attachment. Children were involved in snack preparation and self service, encouraging them to be independent and develop life skills. Some children had lunch in the hall and others in the room. We saw friendships developing between children and conversations being had around the tables. One parent told us that if their child had a packed lunch, this meant that they would have to stay in the room for lunch. We encouraged the service to continue to reflect on the lunch time experience for both spaces to ensure there are consistent experiences and opportunities; for example, allowing children to serve their own food in the hall. This will ensure that children are supported to develop real life skills.

The staff team had recently worked on supporting children to recognise their own emotions and talk about their own well-being. As a result, children were building their confidence to regulate their emotions. There were cosy spaces inside and outside where children could rest, relax and spend time alone, which further supported their emotional wellbeing. For example, a hammock outside and den spaces inside were developed for children to relax in. This meant that children were respected and given space and time if they were tired.

Systems for recording medication were in place, including parental permissions, storage information and records of administration. Medication was reviewed regularly with parents and was stored appropriately. This robust approach ensured that children's individual medical needs were fully considered and met.

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality theme as very good.

Quality indicator - 1.3 Play and learning

Children engaged in uninterrupted free flow play through almost all of the session. Children led their play and were able to independently select resources of their choice. This extended time allowed children to explore and learn at a pace that was right for them. For example, children were seen digging holes in the garden for extended periods of time as they laughed and had fun with their peers and staff. This showed us children felt safe and secure in the nursery environment.

Children benefitted from the effective use of loose parts play materials. This meant children's creativity was promoted as they were able to develop their problem solving skills. For example, a variety of tyres, old steering wheels and natural objects outside and in the sand area were used effectively to engage children in play. As a result, children were well supported to develop their creative thinking.

Personal planning was effectively used to share observations, next steps in learning and development progress with parents. Personal plans and observations carefully considered best practice guidance, such as GIRFEC practice (getting it right for every child). Parents told us that they had time to look over children's journals and received updates on SEESAW (an app to share learning between home and the setting). Some parents said that they would like to see more updates on SEESAW for their individual children.

Children were meaningfully involved in their learning. They knew where their learning journal was kept and were enthusiastic about sharing these with us. Staff identified and supported children's achievements and this helped consolidate their learning.

Children could take resources between areas, which promoted extended learning and curiosity. Children spent a lot of time outdoors and enjoyed the benefits of fresh air, physical exercise and using open ended materials. We saw staff supported play well with very good levels of interactions and some reflective questioning which promoted confidence, independence and helped children to reflect on their learning. We suggested that the staff extend the use of effective questions in children's play to further develop children's thinking.

Planning approaches were child centred and children were actively involved in planning. Displays were used effectively to highlight children's learning. Children had individual next steps in their learning which key workers were able to speak confidently about. As a result, children were supported to reach their full potential.

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 theme as very good.

Quality Indicator - 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The indoor and outdoor environments were thoughtfully developed to provide a welcoming, comfortable and homely space with plenty of soft lighting, ventilation and direct access to a secure outside garden. The playroom was set out in a manner which enabled children to access resources easily while providing space to move freely. As a result, children were able to move between areas and confidently lead their own learning.

Children had access to resources that were of a very good quality, well-presented, and encouraged exploration, enquiry and fun. The continuous provision indoors and outdoors had been well considered to include a wide variety of interesting, open-ended and natural resources. As a result, children were enabled to explore opportunities which promoted and challenged their curiosity and imagination. Parents told us that the children benefited from a very stimulating and interesting environment. We observed children following their own interests within the play spaces. For example, children were able to move resources freely across the playroom to develop their play. This meant that children were given freedom to explore and their ideas were respected.

Children's current interests, achievements and successes were displayed on learning walls around the setting. Their voice was valued and recorded by the staff and captured on well-presented displays. For example, some children's artwork was displayed in frames and their words were recorded to describe the work. This approach enabled children to take pride in their work, present their ideas and showed that they mattered.

Children benefitted from free flow play between the indoor and outdoor area. This enabled children to have choice, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. Children of all ages were confident moving around their play room. This showed us children felt safe and secure in the nursery environment. Outdoors, children were having fun balancing, digging in the mud and using the hammock. Links with Smart Play Network had been established to support the development of the outdoor space with parents and children. As a result, parents were meaningfully involved in their children's learning.

Children's information such as care plans and registration information were kept securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed the information to meet children's needs. This meant protection of children's information complied with relevant best practice.

Robust risk assessments were in place, reviewed regularly and effectively highlighted hazards and appropriate actions to minimise potential risks to children and staff. Children benefitted from a risk benefit approach from the staff team which valued meaningful real life experiences such has using real tools and exploring the local woods. This was supported very well by staff who knew when to step back to let children explore independently and when to intervene.

Infection prevention and control practices were embedded across the service. Children and staff were seen regularly washing their hands in line with good practice. The majority of children were confident and familiar with their routines. We reminded the service that anything stored in the toilet area must be in an enclosed container and easily cleaned. This will ensure the potential spread of infection is minimised.

How good is our leadership? 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 theme as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The passionate and dedicated team were committed to delivering high quality experiences for children and families and making sure that children were at the heart of their practice. Children were meaningfully consulted about the quality of the setting in a variety of ways, valuing their many voices. For example, some children drew pictures to talk about the things that they liked about the service.

Staff members recorded children's voice to support the evaluation of the service and acted on what they had said. This robust approach showed that children's voice was valued, listened to across the setting and led to improvements.

Robust quality assurance systems were in place which evaluated many aspects of practice and led to continuous improvement. Improvement planning and quality assurance were very effective and involved collecting, acting and reflecting on feedback from staff, parents and children. This meant everyone felt included and their views were listened to. Staff were committed to their role and shared responsibility for the monitoring and development of the nursery. This included tracking systems, auditing medication, observation recording and developing the environment. Accident and incident records were in place and audited to inform risk management of the nursery. This meant outcomes for children were very positive.

An improvement plan was in place which highlighted specific targets and clear focus areas. For example, one of the priorities included developing activities and opportunities related to STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths). Staff took on a variety of leadership roles to lead together. They were responsible for planning improvements thoroughly and measuring the impact on outcomes for children through a cycle of reflection. One parent told us that you could see how the setting had improved over the past six months. This meant that parents recognised the positive changes in the setting and children benefited from a setting which improved through shared responsibility.

We found that quality assurance systems were in place, robust and improved the overall quality of the service. Management and staff were reflective of their work and the experiences of children. The whole team approach to evaluation and inviting families to contribute promoted a shared responsibility for effective change.

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 theme as very good.

Quality Indicator - 4.3 Staff deployment

The staff team communicated well with each other when a task took them away from their designated area. They informed each other when leaving the room for something or attending to a child's needs. The ethos between team members was positive and interactions between staff were kind and respectful. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children to feel comfortable and secure in.

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that the right number of staff were meeting children's individual needs consistently throughout most of the day. Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision and quality engagement with children. This included during staff breaks, which were well planned for to minimise the impact on children's experiences. As a result, staff had the opportunity to rest and be refreshed. This ensured key tasks and responsibilities could be carried out most of the day, whilst ensuring continued positive outcomes for children. We suggested that the deployment of staff be reviewed as the service develops their lunch time experience to ensure smooth transitions for children.

There was a wide range of regular opportunities for training. Staff spoke confidently and passionately about their recent training.

Staff chose training that linked closely with the improvement priorities of the setting and children's needs. As a result, children benefitted from a knowledgeable and committed staff team.

A good mixture of skills, knowledge and experience in the staff team contributed to positive interactions, play and learning experiences for children. Staff told us they felt very well supported by the leadership team and had regular opportunities to discuss training and children's learning. The families that we spoke with highlighted the kind, supportive and approachable staff team as a strength of the service. This meant that staff felt valued and empowered to grow professionally and provided children with a happy, secure and supportive environment.

New staff members completed an induction process which highlighted the policies, procedures, risk assessments and aspects of health and safety. There was a mentor in place for new staff. Staff spoke about this process and found it supportive as they started their new role. The service had begun to use the national induction resource as a whole staff team and we encouraged them to continue with this approach. This will further support staff to develop their skills and ensure positive outcomes for children.

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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