St. Mark's Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Clark Drive
Irvine
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Telephone: 01294 271 167

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 March 2023

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003044470

About the service

St. Mark's Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 20 children aged from three years and above. The service operates from St Mark's Primary school in Irvine, North Ayrshire. The care service provider is North Ayrshire Council.

The accommodation consists of cloakroom, multi-purpose/lunch room, main playroom with direct access to an outdoor play space. The service is situated at the edge of a local housing estate and close to local amenities, including shops, schools and bus routes.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 March 2023 between 08:40 and 17:15. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service
- gathered feedback from three parents/carers of children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and the facilities
- reviewed a sample of relevant records.

Key messages

• Children experienced warm, nurturing care from staff which helped them feel happy, secure and safe.

• Children enjoyed spending time in their early years class and had fun playing with their friends.

• Staff worked well together creating a welcoming environment for children and their families.

• Quality assurance processes need to be further embedded to secure sustained improvement across the early years class.

• Staff should review the balance of adult directed and child initiated play during children's sessions.

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 experienced warmth and nurture in how they were supported and cared for. Consistent positive interactions between staff and children were playful, kind and caring, respectful of children's diversity. Children were supported to express their thoughts and feelings. This helped children to be confident feeling safe to communicate their views developing relationships with staff and other children.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. Each child had a personal plan to enable staff to provide personalised care to meet children's individual health safety and well being needs. Linking with home enabled staff to build family relationships taking account of children's preferences.

Where children required additional support, this was quickly identified. Staff worked proactively with children, families, and other professionals to identify appropriate next steps and strategies based on individual children's needs. This meant that children were receiving the correct interventions in a timely manner and promoted positive outcomes for children. We asked the manager to consider how information is shared including personal plans for children who have a blended placement with other early years services as part of their funded place.

Children experienced a mostly positive lunch experience. Staff sat the table with the children to offer support and respond to any safety concerns such as choking. We reminded staff to ensure food is prepared safely before serving following good practice guidance prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children.pdf (careinspectorate.com). We found that most children ate their lunch however those who did not wish what was on offer had not been offered an alternative. Children's early experiences of food play an important part in shaping later eating habits, and good eating habits support healthy growth and development. The manager agreed to discuss this further with senior managers. This will help children to develop a positive relationship with eating at mealtimes.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children chose their own play from the activities on offer. Children had fun as they played with friends or on their own. Children who required more adult support to engage in purposeful play were supported by staff.

Experiences were planned using information from children's personal plan targets. Staff involved children in planning for play and learning carrying out observations to help plan. The quality of observations is not yet consistent. Staff would benefit from support to continue to develop their skills recording observations to support planning for future learning.

Children had opportunity to develop skills in language, literacy and numeracy however there was some missed opportunities to extend children's thinking both indoors and outdoors for example at to explore, experiment, and extend ideas developing more specific language and understanding around pouring, measuring, volume, and capacity. More opportunity for children to mark make in all areas of play would

support them to understand the purpose of writing in all environments able to share their ideas through the written word.

During the session there is some opportunity for children make informed choices to lead their own play however the balance between child-initiated, adult initiated and adult-directed experiences should be reviewed to allow children to have more choice helping them to make decisions leading their own learning.

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 bright, ventilated and spacious playroom with direct access to the outdoor play area. Staff supported children to help them develop problem solving, fine and gross motor skills to dress themselves in outdoor clothes. Staff should continue with their plan to develop the outdoor green space to offer children a wider outdoor play and learning experience.

A cloakroom space ensured each child had access to their own space to store their personal items, which helped promote a sense of belonging. Children benefitted from having a separate quieter room to play in small groups or have one to one time with staff. Some homely touches and decoration helped children to feel welcomed and included.

Children could easily access resources from open storage baskets labelled with picture and print helping to promote choice. A range of natural materials and loose parts outdoors enabled children to engage in discovery, exploratory and creative play. Children particularly enjoyed creating using the large blocks outdoors.

There are clear policies and procedures in place to support consistent approaches across the setting to keep children safe. However, we found infection prevention and control practice in relation to handwashing was not consistent. Children did not always wash hands when coming from outdoor play or after blowing their nose. The manager will continue to monitor this through quality assurance methods.

Leaders are aware of their responsibilities to protect children's confidential information Appropriate systems are in place to manage electronic information in line with general data protection.

Secure access into the service was operated by staff helping to ensure no children leave unauthorised or any unauthorised entry to the service. Staff should ensure systems in place are consistently followed and a review of how children are signed in and out of the early years class should be carried out with any changes shared with families.

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

Leaders had successfully led the staff in having a shared vision and aims. They understood the importance of including others in achieving their vision. Staff are committed to ensuring children and their families have the best possible experience. A planned review of the vision values and aims for the early years class, shared with families, will further help to positively inform practice.

Children and families' views were actively sought to inform the development of the setting. Staff worked hard to involve all families to gather views to support improvement. Any responses gathered from parents using questionnaires, evaluations of parent groups, stay and play and digital methods were collated and used to influence improvement. Staff should continue with their ongoing consultation with parents.

Some effective quality assurance processes were in place, that were impacting positively on outcomes for children and families. This included the service's improvement plan and self-evaluation activities, which reflected key areas for improvement, including some we identified during our visit. Staff had a good understanding of the identified improvement priorities within the whole school improvement plan. Moving forward, staff will benefit from exploring further how they will act on the specific priorities that are relevant to the early years class. They should consider how they will share any progress made with children and parents to enable participation in this improvement process.

Although self-evaluation was carried out as part of the school using in-service days throughout the year, the culture of self-evaluation could be further developed within the staff team. Staff should refresh self-evaluation processes to ensure they are clearly identifying any actions they plan to take for improvement. As a team, continuing to familiarise themselves with. A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare will provide an additional self-evaluation tool linked to the Health and Social Care Standards.

Team meetings provided staff with opportunities to receive updates on the service and kept them informed about all aspects of school life. These opportunities enabled them to discuss individual children and share their ideas we suggested keeping a record of these meetings would be beneficial.

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 model of provision within the early years class currently offered children either a morning or afternoon session. This meant staff worked set shifts resulting in shared breaks which allowed them to refresh and supported development of the team. Any staff cover for absence had been organised to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions. A staff noticeboard ensured parents could see at a glance who would be caring for their child.

A key worker system supported staff to develop positive and caring relationships. Staff promoted children's confidence and self-esteem through sensitive interactions. They knew children well and responded to their interests and needs. This meant that children were valued and respected. Staff were attuned to children

needs, children who required additional support were supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. A parent told us;

'The staff are very pleasant, very warming and easy to speak to. My child has grown close bonds with a few staff members. They know my child very well and I am aware that they meet their individual needs'.

The manager was in the process of carrying out planned professional review and development meetings to support staff to develop in their role and support their wellbeing. This will support staff development and identify any training needs linked to the service priorities for improvement.

Staff communicated well together if moving away from their area or leaving the playroom. They were clear in their responsibilities to ensure staffing levels were maintained to supervise children and available to engage with children to meet specific needs. We discussed with the manager developing a timetable for when the lead professional would be in the playroom would support playroom planning.

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	5 - Very 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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