Auchinloch Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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8 November 2023

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2005105599

About the service

Auchinloch Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care for 20 children not yet attending primary school.

Care is provided from a converted class within the school, which is located within a quiet residential area of Auchinloch, North Lanarkshire. The service is based within the primary school and is close to woodlands, green space and transport routes.

Children were accommodated within one large playroom and had access to a secure outdoor space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 November 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 ten of their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were warm, caring and kind. Their interactions were unhurried and responsive to children's needs.
- Children were cared for in a warm, nurturing environment where they were supported to develop their independence, skills and abilities.
- Staff knew children well and placed children at the heart of their approach.
- Children were happy, settled and having fun playing and learning. Children were given the time and space to make choices, directing their own play and learning.
- The service should continue to develop the outdoor environment to promote children's independence and choice.
- Improvements had been made to the premises, such as the refurbishment of bathroom and changing facilities, creating a more welcoming and inviting space. However, we have suggested some further areas where improvements could still be made.
- Quality assurance processes should be further developed to support continuous improvement in the service.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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 attending the service were happy, settled and secure. They were confident in their interactions with staff and each other. Staff used meaningful praise, chatting and singing to children as they supported them. This helped children to feel valued and loved. One parent told us, "staff genuinely care about children and are warm and kind towards them."

Children's emotional wellbeing and resilience was supported through positive, nurturing and trusting relationships with staff. They were encouraged to share how they were feeling throughout the day. Children used the 'colour monster' resource, which helped them to express an emotion, such as sad or happy. They confidently told us about which emotion each colour represented and why they felt that way. This helped to ensure children's needs were being met, as their wellbeing was supported. One child told us "at nursery I feel loved."

Parents and carers were involved in nursery life. Planned events such as stay and play days and community walks, had been well received by families and contributed to strengthened relationships that supported meeting children's needs. One parent told us "stay and play days have been great. Its been good to come in and see the nursery and what my child does everyday."

Effective personal plans were in place for all children, with consideration being given to ensure wellbeing indicators captured a true reflection of children's learning and development. Targets were agreed and reviewed with parents, with clear strategies implemented to ensure children's needs were met.

Children were encouraged to make independent choices throughout their session including snack time. We observed snack time to be a time for children and staff to talk together and connect. This experience promoted children to develop skills in literacy and numeracy through conversations and problem solving, as well as promoting their independence. For example, children were cutting and preparing fruit and vegetables for snack.

Lunch time had been reviewed to ensure a calm, unhurried lunchtime experience for children. Children were actively involved in setting the tables, identifying how many children were having lunch and setting the table for relevant numbers. We observed children were confident in this approach, with interactions from staff supporting self esteem, independence and numeracy skills. Since the previous inspection, opportunities for self-serving had been introduced promoting further opportunities for children to develop their independence and skills for life.

Children were safe and protected from harm with clear policies and procedures in place relating to child protection. Staff clearly understood the role they played in this and had all undertaken annual child protection training. The headteacher acted as the child protection officer, ensuring a robust system was in place and we were confident that any child protection matters would be responded to appropriately.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun while at nursery, where their play and learning was supported by having access to a range of play spaces. They had opportunities to use their imagination and explore their natural curiosity. One parent told us, "a wide range of activities are available for children on daily basis."

Staff provided a mixture of spontaneous and planned experiences to support children's learning through play. A rolling snack and free-flow approach to play meant children's play was not unnecessarily interrupted and they could make meaningful play choices, promoting child led play.

Children were confident when self-selecting resources and knew where to find resources. Staff were skilled at balancing observation and interactions to create experiences that were responsive to children's needs and interest. For example, providing craft materials in response to children's interest in making clothes for their dolls. Staff communicated well to ensure they offered play at the appropriate level, working closely together when making responsive adaptions when needed.

We observed opportunities where play experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, children were using mathematical language whilst making playdough. We asked the service to continue to build on these opportunities to ensure progression in all children's development.

Children were engaged in play and were progressing well in their overall development. We observed children engage in play experience for prolonged periods of time showing high levels of engagement, excitement, wonder and awe. For example, children were using guttering and buckets to explore the forces of gravity when playing with water outdoors, demonstrating good problem solving skills.

Staff were responsive to children through skilled observations, responding appropriately to support their learning, through skilful questioning. This helped extend children's thinking and learning. The service should continue to develop approaches that record children's thoughts and ideas, that help direct their play and learning.

Children opportunities to play and learning were enhanced through connections to the community. The service made good use of local space using the local parks as part of their community walks/wellie walks and had plans to develop this through a forest school approach.

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 benefitted from an environment that was bright, warm and comfortable. Some homely touches, such as displays, photographs and soft furnishings helped create a welcoming environment for children and their families. There were displays of children's art creations, photographs of their families and experiences. This gave a clear message that children mattered and belonged. We asked with the service to consider the height and purpose of some displays and they agreed.

Careful consideration had been given to the layout of the room, to offer a range of spaces for children to make choices, support their interest and develop their ideas. The freely chosen play opportunities allowed children to lead and direct their own learning. Since the last inspection the service had developed cosier spaces for children. This provided spaces for children to rest, relax and self regulate, which supported their emotional wellbeing.

We discussed how some areas could be further enhanced to support and stimulate children's natural curiosity. For example, adding further materials to the house corner and playdough areas to promote creativity and imagination. This would continue to support and stimulate children's natural curiosity. We also discussed how the service should further develop approaches to ensure literacy and numeracy is embedded in all areas of the environment.

Children had access to an outdoor area directly from the playroom. They had the opportunity to flow between indoors and outdoors all day. Children enjoyed spending time outdoors exploring open ended resources, taking part in risky play and being creative in the mud kitchen. We encouraged the service to continue to reflect and enhance outdoor learning experiences, as identified in their improvement plan. This would support depth, richness and curiosity in play.

Children benefitted from a safe and secure setting with a range of safety measures in place to ensure children didn't come to harm. This included secure entry systems, clear boundary fencing, secure gates as well as regular headcounts and communication between staff.

Since the previous inspection, considerable work had been completed to improve infection prevention control within setting. This included adaptations to the nappy changing area, which included a designated changing unit and new sink unit. This created a more welcoming and presentable environment for children.

Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection, supporting a safe environment for children. The nursery was clean and handwashing took place regularly. Nappy changing areas were clean, with Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) being stored appropriately.

Accidents and incidents were managed well to support children's health and wellbeing. Accident forms were completed and appropriate first aid administered when needed. Regular audits of accidents were completed. However, these should now be further developed to help recognise any patterns of accidents or incidents, detailing any actions needed (we further discuss this under Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well).

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

There had been recent changes in management within the service. Management and staff had fostered good relationships and worked together, to ensure a positive ethos within the setting.

The management team worked well together. They knew the service strengths and areas for further improvement and were fully aware of the direction they want to go and were committed to achieving this. Parents were very happy with how well the service was being led. One parent described the management team as "approachable and motivated."

The management team and staff were welcoming and engaging throughout the inspection. The service had reflected on best practice guidance to help inform and shape their understanding in prioritising improvements needed. An action plan had been developed, which highlighted key areas of improvement. This had contributed to positive changes to the environment and to the delivery of the service. For example, improvements had been made to the play environment and lunchtime experiences.

To ensure continued improved outcomes for children and families, the service should continue to build self evaluation processes into their practice. This will contribute to change and will help to drive positive outcomes for children and families.

The service encouraged feedback from parents, through gathering their views to ensure families were meaningfully included and influenced change within the setting. Information gathered was considered and findings reported back to the parents to show changes and any actions that were required. The service should continue to develop this approach, ensuring children's voices are included within self evaluation processes.

There were systems in place for monitoring and auditing the delivery of service and we acknowledge this is an ongoing process. However, management should further develop these to ensure these are robust and identifying gaps. For example, enhancing auditing systems to help identify any patterns of accidents and measures needed to reduce accidents.

Staff felt supported by the management team and that their views and suggestions mattered. Regular team meeting and opportunities to communicate empowered staff to discuss, identify and take forward areas for improvement. For example, the introduction of intervention groups to support outcomes for children.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff worked well together to create a positive, caring and welcoming environment for children. They were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with the children. Parents described staff as "lovely, kind and caring" and "knowledgeable, nurturing and engaging."

We observed the setting had enough staff to meet the individual needs of children. Staff had time to listen, respond and care for children, helping them feel valued and loved.

Staff understood that continuity of care was important for children and communicated well with each other when tasks took them away from their responsibilities. Staff worked well to ensure children were supervised throughout the day and there was minimal disruption to their play. For example, staff breaks and rotas were planned to maximise children's experiences and ensure minimal disruption to children.

There were a good range of skills and experience across the team. Staff had engaged in a variety of training opportunities and professional reading to develop their knowledge and skills.
Staff knew children's individual needs well, which helped ensure they received consistent and responsive care across the day. All parents commented positively on the support their children received. One parent told us, "they really know every child and what their needs are. They are key to the nursery experience."

Staff communicated through a variety of methods. For example, staff meetings and daily dialogue. This supported consistent information sharing and provided opportunities for staff to have professional dialogues to support practice. For example, using 'Wellbeing Wednesday' meetings to plan for children's individual needs, ensuring continuity of care.

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 support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should make improvements to the toilet and changing facilities for children to protect their privacy and dignity.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'If I require intimate care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and preferences respected.' (HSCS 1.4).

This area for improvement was made on 17 March 2023.

Action taken since then
The service had refurbished the toilet and changing facilities. This included adaptations to the nappy changing area, which including a designated changing unit and new sink unit. This created a more welcoming and presentable environment for children, which ensured children's dignity and privacy was respected.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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