Nethermains Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Bulloch Crescent
Denny
FK6 5AR

Telephone: 01324 508 830

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 December 2022

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2006141331

About the service

Nethermains Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service provided by Falkirk Council. Children have access to an open plan play space with direct access to an enclosed playground. The service is situated in the town of Denny, with a number of local amenities close by such as shops, a library and woodland areas. The service is close to a number of local transport links.

This service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. It is registered to provide a service to 66 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 13 December 2022 between 09:15 and 17:00. Feedback was provided at the end of the inspection visit. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with all children in the service
- spoke with four families on the day of the inspection and reviewed four emails we received from families
- reviewed one email from a visiting professional
- spoke with the manager and staff
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced positive relationships with staff and each other.
- Children benefitted from relaxed, unhurried mealtimes which supported their independence.
- Children led their own play and staff were responsive to their interests.
- Recording children's individual learning could be further developed to identify progress and celebrate achievements.
- The service could extend opportunities for outdoor play using a risk benefit approach.
- Developing risk assessments and supporting staff to understand how to support risky play, would allow children to benefit from a wider variety of experiences.
- Self-evaluation could be further developed to support the service to identify their strengths and areas for development.

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 several important strengths taken together, outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children's overall wellbeing was supported well as staff responded to them in kind, calm and respectful ways. This helped children to form positive and nurturing relationships. One child told us that staff were 'helpful and caring'.

Children enjoyed an unhurried and relaxed eating experience. They could choose when they ate, which allowed them to enjoy uninterrupted play. Visual aids supported children to be involved in planning the snack menu and make choices about what they ate. Children were supported to be independent by pouring their own drinks, serving their own food, and clearing their plates. The service should find ways to provide all children with opportunities to be fully independent by wiping their own clothes and faces after they've eaten. Allergies and dietary requirements were identified and supported well. Staff sat with children for most of the time. Further consideration could be given to how staff engage with children during mealtimes, to promote high quality interactions. This would provide rich opportunities to promote close attachment and develop relationships.

Systems for recording medication were in place, including parental permissions, storage information and records of administration. We encouraged the service to review the forms and checks being completed. This could reduce duplication of information and ensure all records were up to date and easily accessible. Information being kept for some medical conditions could be further enhanced. We encouraged the service to work with families and health professionals to develop medical action plans. This would enable children's individual needs to be fully considered and support staff to offer timely and appropriate personalised care.

All children had personal plans in place which included registration information, such as their personal details and family contact information. Some plans had individual strategies of support. The service was trialling a new way of recording and monitoring children's individual learning and progress. Due to the early stages of the new system, not all children had planned next steps, or individual strategies of support. Personal plans should be further developed so they enhance children's individual experiences and outcomes, to allow children to achieve and fulfil their potential. (See area for improvement 1).

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were meaningfully and actively leading their play through a variety of open-ended play opportunities available. For example, we saw children making their own play dough, creating pictures with arts and crafts materials, and building using large play blocks. These supported children's choice, creativity and fun.

Staff took part in twice weekly team 'huddles' to discuss children's experiences and reflect on opportunities to extend children's play and learning. Play experiences were recorded in a floorbook which identified children's learning, their voices, and possible next steps to extend children's common interests. To further enhance this, the service could consider how they can evaluate the planned next steps and record play and learning for individual children. This would allow children's individual progress to be monitored, identify their achievements, and support children to reflect on their learning.

We asked the service to review opportunities for risky play. For example, the woodwork bench was not available for children to use on the day of the inspection. This resource provides an opportunity for children to build their self-esteem and confidence, and supports children to express their imagination and problem solve. Providing support for staff to take a balanced approach towards risk and review the benefits of experiences, would enhance children's opportunities for play and learning.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's learning, development and progress, the provider should further develop personal plans. They should ensure children's plans reflect their learning, achievements and progress, and provide clear next steps. Where individual strategies of support are required, these should be recorded and regularly reviewed, to ensure they are working as planned and meeting children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths taken together, outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

The setting offered a safe, secure and well-ventilated environment. There was a wide range of relevant age and stage appropriate resources for children to choose freely, which reflected their interests. Resources such as loose parts were used effectively to promote children's curiosity, imagination, and creativity. This meant that children were engaged in meaningful play.

Staff knew children's personal routines and preferences which meant children were able to sleep and rest when they needed to. The team had developed quiet spaces and areas where children could relax and rest. Suitable sleeping mats were used for most children, and they had individual bedding. One child slept in a buggy, so we directed the service to safe sleep practice and asked them to review their procedures. This would ensure children's safety and wellbeing was promoted. (See area for improvement 1).

The effective use of soft furnishings and low lighting meant that some spaces were warm and inviting for children. We spoke with the service about how this could be extended throughout the whole environment. This would ensure that children are able to engage in play in a calm, relaxed space.

The service had developed daily checklists which helped identify some potential hazards while on outings, in the garden, and indoors. This could be extended to identify how potential risks could be minimised to ensure a risk benefit approach to children's play and experiences. Developing robust risk assessments would support staff to have a consistent understanding of how to manage risks in children's play. This would allow children to benefit from a variety of activities that provide challenge and fun in a safe way. (See area for improvement 2).

Children were encouraged and supported to wash their hands at key times throughout the session. Enhanced cleaning was in place and there were clear expectations of responsibilities to ensure key tasks were carried out. All staff had completed infection prevention and control training to highlight the importance of this to keep children safe. Staff's own approach to hand hygiene was not consistent. We asked the service to develop a policy around infection prevention and control to support safe working practice. This will ensure that children are cared for in a safe and hygienic environment.

During our visit we found that access to the outside space was limited. Playing, learning and having fun outdoors helps to improve children's wellbeing and resilience, and improves children's physical health. We suggested ways to create risk assessments to support free flow play between outdoor and indoors in all weathers. This would ensure children had access to fresh air and benefit from experiencing the outdoor space in a variety of conditions. (See area for improvement 3).

Children's information was stored securely, and confidentiality was respected. This demonstrated the service's commitment to understanding and following guidelines on data protection.

Areas for improvement

1. To enable children to sleep and rest in a safe environment, the provider should ensure current guidance regarding safe sleeping practice is implemented.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

2. To promote children's health, safety and wellbeing, the provider should ensure risk assessments are developed and working as planned, to support effective practice and maintain a safe environment. These should be clear and easily understood by all people involved in the service. Staff involvement in developing the risk assessments would support this to be a shared approach and impact positively on these being implemented into practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

3. To promote children's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure children have opportunities for daily outdoor play experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths taken together, outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had recently reviewed their vision, values and aims, which focussed on meaningful relationships with children and their families. This was evident as staff greeted children and their families warmly and with a smile. Parents told us about relationships with the staff team which were supportive, responsive and caring.

Some quality assurance systems were in place. For example, there were planned approaches to review aspects of practice, training, and parental engagement. An improvement plan was in place which highlighted specific targets and clear focus areas. This helped the service to set improvements that were achievable, to support positive outcomes for children. For example, a recent focus on parental engagement resulted in families coming back into the setting at drop off and pick up times. Parents told us that this supported their children's transition and made them feel welcomed. This meant that parents felt valued, listened to and included in their children's nursery experience.

Staff were developing a shared understanding of their responsibility in supporting improvements. Some staff had opportunities to develop their leadership skills throughout the setting. For example, one staff member led on children's literacy learning. They had developed creative approaches to engage families to be involved in areas of children's play and learning. Parents had been invited into the service to understand the importance of storytelling and allow the service to share ideas that can support children's literacy learning. This was further supported with a lending library which allowed children to continue learning at home and helped parents feel included in their child's development. This meant that staff felt valued and empowered to contribute to improvements in the setting. We asked the service to consider how more staff could lead area developments, and find ways to measure the positive impact on children's learning outcomes.

Regular and purposeful communication took place with parents and carers. The leadership team had started to gather the views of families about the service. They used Twitter and newsletters to communicate with families, and had used questionnaires to gather views. This should now be extended to show how children and families' views are used to inform the development of the setting.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths taken together, outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

The management team had worked hard to develop the service following the expansion, and supported the new staff team to build trusting working relationships. The team were committed, and actively took part in the inspection process. They worked well to create a positive atmosphere and welcomed children and families into the service.

Partnership working with families was a focus for the management team and staff. One parent told us, 'Being able to take part in things within the nursery has made such a difference as a parent to see how my child is doing'. The service recognised the importance of engaging with children and their families at the earliest possible stage. Two members of staff undertook home visits before children started nursery. This allowed them to meet staff and share information in a relaxed and informal way and was a good first step to developing important relationships.

Staff communicated well as a team. Roles and responsibilities of staff within each area of the nursery were displayed, which ensured key tasks were carried out and supported consistent practice. For example, staff knew who was responsible for offering additional support outdoors if needed and who was responsible for completing the attendance records. This helped to provide the necessary supervision of children and offered consistent opportunities and experiences.

Breaks and lunches for staff were planned to minimise disruption to children's play. The service could further review staffing levels at busier times of the day, such as after children's lunch. This would ensure there is enough support for children to continue to lead and enjoy their play.

Staff worked well together to maintain engagement with children as they moved around the spaces available, and were flexible and responsive. Children were comfortable and familiar with all staff which allowed them to freely and confidently access all areas in the playroom. This allowed children to feel safe and secure in the environment.

Staff told us they felt supported in the service and included in areas for development. An induction programme was in place to allow staff to familiarise themselves with policies and procedures in the service. We signposted them to the ELC national induction resource to review their procedure. Creating a more formal induction and mentoring support for staff, would guide and enhance staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities of being registered workers. This would support staff to continue to further develop their skills for ensuring positive outcomes for children.

The management team carried out regular appraisals with staff, which provided opportunities for them to talk about their strengths and developmental needs. As a result, children benefitted from a committed team who were focused on supporting positive outcomes for children, families and the service.

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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