# Elrick School Nursery
# Day Care of Children

Elrick Nursery School
Rowan Drive
Westhill
AB32 6QB

Telephone: 01224 741 900

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
1 December 2022

**Service provided by:**
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**
SP2003000029

**Service no:**
CS2007167766

## About the service

Elrick School Nursery provides a daycare of children service in Westhill in Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 24 children at any one time aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is located within a residential community within Westhill and is provided by Aberdeenshire Council. The service is close to local parks, shops, and other local amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 30 November 2022 between 08:30 and 16:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 1 December 2022. The inspection was carried out by two early years 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 since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- we spoke with the children using the service and 16 of their family members
- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with management and the staff team
- reviewed documents

## Key messages

• Children were happily engaged in play and learning throughout the whole nursery.

• Children received nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well.

• Children were leading their own play and their needs were well supported by a staff team who used skilled interactions.

• Effective communication and positive relationships supported children and families.

• A range of effective systems were in place supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

• Staff were well supported by a manager who considered their health and wellbeing and professional development needs.

## 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 key question as very good.

**Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support**

Children benefitted from a nurturing and supportive staff team. Staff were warm and responsive in their approaches and knew the children well. This allowed the staff to offer individualised care and support. Parents told us staff knew their children and were responsive to their needs and were well supported when settling into the nursery.

Children's health and wellbeing was well supported with effective use of personal planning that considered the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators which include safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. This supported children to reach their full potential and helped ensure prompt external support was accessed when required. A parent told us how staff had helped to ensure the correct external support was accessed for their child. Children's support plans could be developed further by clearly identifying specific strategies for support. This would help to ensure continuity of care for children with specific needs.

Children benefitted from robust procedures for storing and administering medication. For example, staff stored medication in a lidded box with the child's name and photo in a medication cupboard. All required paperwork was completed accurately. This supported children's health, wellbeing, and safety.

Mealtimes were seen to be unhurried and positive social experiences, where staff and children sat together. Children benefitted from a well-considered snack routine offering lots of opportunities for independence and life skills to be developed. For example, children were supported to wash and prepare fruit for snack and pour their own drinks. Children had free choice when choosing where to sit for snack. This supported them to feel respected and make decisions. Lunch was served in the school canteen. The transition was well managed which supported children to be safe. Children benefitted from nutritious food supporting health and wellbeing. The team could review the lunch time experience to ensure all children were served in a more timely manner. This would reduce any opportunities for children to become restless.

Children chose to access a recently developed rest area which was well considered and offered opportunities for rest and sleep. This supported children's wellbeing and resilience and was well utilised by children throughout the day.

**Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning**

Children were leading their own play and learning through a range of planned and spontaneous experiences. Staff recorded planning and used floorbooks to record experiences and learning. Children benefitted from a learning wall which supported them to revisit their learning and they independently chose where they wanted to play. A play-based approach was firmly embedded within the service which supported children to benefit from a wide range of experiences. Staff responded to children's interests and wishes and used effective questioning to support problem solving. For example, children were supported to paint winter pictures in response to a child's interest at the interactive smartboard. Children were having fun learning, being inquisitive, creative, and using skills to develop critical thinking.

Children benefitted from a nursery room that was rich in environmental print and from a skilled staff team who encouraged the development of children's literacy, numeracy, and language. For example, we saw children take part in a number hunt in the garden where staff supported them with identifying numbers and mark making. Staff celebrated children's achievements with them which supported them to feel valued and recognised.

Children's opportunities were enhanced through strong connections to the wider community being developed. For example, staff were able to talk about going apple picking with the children and taking part in the mucky moss experience which promoted exploration. Parents told us children were regularly out in the community and went further afield during non-term time. This supported children's inclusion and sense of belonging.

Staff displayed good knowledge and understanding of child development and were experienced in supporting children with additional support needs. High quality observations were well written and identified skills and learning which were being developed with appropriate next steps for children. To further enhance this, the staff could increase the frequency of observations to support children to develop a broad range of lifelong skills.

## 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 key question as very good.

**Quality Indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities**

The service was welcoming and nurturing, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Children benefitted from a free flow system allowing them to move freely and confidently between the indoor and outdoor environment. Children's artwork was displayed throughout the environment, creating a space that recognised and celebrated children's achievements and promoted a strong sense that children were at the heart of this service.

The nursery learning environment provided opportunities to extend and support individual children's learning and interests. For example, staff had adapted part of the outdoor area to support children's current interests supporting a child who was keen to master cycling. Staff had considered the varying stages of development and had a range of wheeled toys to support this. Children's creativity, imagination and critical thinking skills were supported through a range of open-ended resources both indoors and out.

Children were supported to be safe through the use of robust risk assessments and policies. These were regularly reviewed and updated. Effective maintenance procedures ensured the environment was well maintained and helped to ensure that children experienced an environment that supported their health and wellbeing.

There were well-managed infection control procedures in place. For example, staff used personal protective equipment (PPE) effectively and adhered to current food hygiene guidance. Staff supported children with effective handwashing at appropriate times throughout the day and had robust cleaning practices in place.

Children's privacy was respected through the safe and effective management of documents and data which was either locked in a cupboard or password protected.

## 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 key question as very good.

**Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

The service was well led by management who promoted a shared vision, values and aims for the service. The nursery ethos was well embedded, and they had been awarded the school's 'kindness trophy'. Staff were encouraged to reflect on their practice and were encouraged to make changes and improvements when required. This supported and further enhanced high quality experiences for children and their families. For example, the development and introduction of the 'SHANARRI squad' supported children and families to be aware of the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.

Children and families benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. An improvement plan, which was regularly monitored, helped ensure progress of planned developments. A robust quality assurance calendar was used which supported the team to effectively evaluate the quality of the service. This resulted in a positive impact on outcomes and experiences for children and families. We suggested that this could be further developed by highlighting and sharing any next steps from their evaluations.

A reflective and responsive staff team positively impacted on children's experiences. Staff reflected on their own practice but also carried out regular peer observations. These highlighted and celebrated achievements and successes and shared some areas for development. Management had well considered approaches in place to support peer learning. For example, there was an effective and well used mentoring system that offered targeted support for staff. We suggested that the peer observations could be further developed by introducing specific aims to support with targeted training.

Regular communication with families took place through various methods. Parents told us the service used emails, newsletters, and the Seesaw App to communicate. Parents also shared that they valued the reintroduction of stay and play sessions and open nights now that Covid-19 restrictions had eased. All parents told us they had the opportunity to talk to a staff member daily at pick up and felt comfortable communicating with the team. This contributed to the positive relationships between families and staff and supported children's continuity of care.

Questionnaires were used to gain feedback, views, and suggestions from families regarding how the service operated. For example, a parent told us they had been asked for their views and evaluations on the recently developed quiet area within the service. This supported families to be meaningfully involved in the service. This could be further developed by sharing feedback with families to inform them of any actions taken forward from their feedback. This would highlight how these actions had impacted positively on children's experiences.

## 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 key question as very good.

**Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment**

A well-managed staff team supported children's health and wellbeing. Busier periods and transitions had been well considered to ensure no disruption to children's play and learning. The staff team were well supported by management. For example, the headteacher sought a relief staff member who was familiar with the service and children to cover a staff absence on the day.

Staff communicated and worked well together as a team to meet the needs of children and were responsive and respectful during their interactions. Staff were flexible within their roles, and we observed an additional member of staff going outdoors to support when required. Effective arrangements for planned and unplanned absences were in place which ensured ratios were upheld. This all ensured that children were kept safe, and well supervised and it promoted effective team working and peer support.

Effective arrangements for planned and unplanned absences were in place which ensured ratios were upheld and children were kept safe. This could be further supported by developing a policy which detailed how this was effectively managed to ensure consistency of care for children.

There was a good mix of skills within the staff team and strengths were well utilised which helped to promote the best experiences for children. All staff had undertaken training and professional reading that had further developed their skills. Staff told us they felt well supported and this was evidenced through regular one to one meetings which included detailed plans for future individual staff development.

An induction programme helped staff understand their roles and responsibilities, contributing to the care and support of children. There was a specific induction programme for relief staff members. We advised that the induction process could be further developed by using the Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource to support effective reflective practice and questioning. This would support management to plan specific support strategies for newly recruited staff and ensure children continued to be cared for by a highly skilled staff team.

# 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

The service should ensure that they are aware when to make notifications to the Care Inspectorate.

**National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to age 16. Standard 14: A Well-Managed Service.**

**This area for improvement was made on 20 September 2016.**

Action taken since then
The service are now making all relevant notifications to the Care Inspectorate.

This area for improvement has been met.

### Previous area for improvement 2

The service should access a copy of the best practice document in relation to medication and use it to review and update their records.

**National Care Standards for Early education and Childcare up to age 16. Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.**

**This area for improvement was made on 20 September 2016.**

Action taken since then
The service have used the best practice document in relation to medication to ensure robust practices to review medication records and maintain the health and wellbeing of children.

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? | 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
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enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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