Drakies Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Drakies Primary School
Drumossie Avenue
Inverness
IV2 3SG

Telephone: 01463 236 032

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 September 2022

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2008174597

About the service

Drakies Primary School Nursery is operated by The Highland Council and is based in the grounds of Drakies Primary School, Inverness. Drakies Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 66 children, aged 3 years and those not yet attending primary school.

The accommodation provided is within two main rooms with direct access to a spacious outdoor play area. The outdoor play area contains a range of loose parts and open ended resources which extend and enrich the children's imaginative play and learning experiences.

The head teacher is the registered manager of the nursery. The nursery operates term time only.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection visit which took place on 27 September and 28 September 2022. 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 people using the service and reviewed questionnaires from 15 parents;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children were happy, confident and having fun.

Children experienced warm and caring interactions from the staff team.

The service had a very good knowledge of each individual child's needs and a plan in place to support their health, safety and wellbeing.

Children have a clear sense of belonging in the setting.

Children enjoyed a lovely sociable meal time experiences.

Thoughtfully resourced outdoor facilities offered children opportunities for learning through play.

The effective deployment of staff enables children to choose to move freely between indoors and outdoors.

The service should consult with families to identify what's working well, to support improvement in the service and the outcomes for children.

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?	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

1:1 Nurturing care and support

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.

The staff provided a very good service to promote positive outcomes for all children and had a lot of knowledge and understanding of the individual care needs of each of the children. Staff were kind, caring and very nurturing in their approach.

Partnership working with parents, carers and other agencies supported information sharing, if children had additional needs, strategies and techniques were agreed, which supported their development. Regular communication and consultation meant personal plans were being routinely reviewed with parents and relevant agencies. Staff spoke knowledgably and confidently about children's individual care needs and what they did to support them. We saw staff responding throughout the day, offering kindness, reassurance and cuddles. As a result, individual children experienced care and support that was right for them.

Mealtimes was a lovely, calm and positive experience in the nursery. The management team and staff had been working on improving lunchtimes as a key improvement area. They had introduced some positive changes to support children's different needs and levels of independence. The options for snack and lunch took account of current nutritional guidance as well as any allergies or dietary needs children attending may have. This was a relaxing part of the day and we saw the staff sitting with the children and chatting to them to create a positive social experience. This helped the children to feel included and support speech and language development.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and protected from harm. They could confidently tell us how they would respond if they had any child protection concerns. This contributed to keeping children safe.

If children required medication, we confirmed it was safely stored. Appropriate information was recorded which ensured it was administered in line with best practice guidance. Accident and incident records were completed fully by the staff and shared with parents in a timely manner. We reminded the management team to ensure an audit was in place to monitor these records.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were engaged in their play throughout the session. We saw children chatting and laughing as they took part in a wide range of activities, including messy play, painting, role play and arts and crafts. Play experiences provided challenge and fun and supported children to develop language, creativity and numeracy skills. For example, some children were making different shapes and textures from playdough. Staff members supported this play by talking to the children about the different shapes of playdough and extending their play by effective questioning on their interests. As a result of this responsive approach by staff, children were able to develop lifelong skills, feel valued and secure.

Planning floor books were in place to capture children's thoughts, interests and to plan play and learning experiences. Children's voices had been recorded to help inform planning processes through quotes,

drawings and questions. Children had fun and experienced a variety of play opportunities which promoted learning and development. Children enjoyed activities both indoors and out. Some favourite activities across the nursery was the bear hut and the book corner. On the day of the inspection, children were happily playing in the cosy bear hut acting out scenes from 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. Children were really engrossed in their play and heard lots of laughing and giggles coming from the hut. These rich learning experiences promoted curiosity, creativity and imagination.

Regular planning meetings enabled staff and the management team to discuss planned approaches and assess the impact on children's play and learning. This ensured play experiences reflected children's interests to successfully engage their imagination creativity and curiosity, which resulted in children having fun and learning through play.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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.

The indoor playrooms were decorated in neutral colours which promoted a natural, calm environment. This provided a homely feel and was welcoming to children. The playrooms were laid out in a manner which helped develop children's independence, resources were easily accessible to enable children to self-select resources of their choice. Children's all about me drawings and photos of the children's families were displayed across the playroom. This gave the children ownership and helped them to feel safe, secure and valued in the service.

The children had free flow access to the outdoor area which provided further opportunities to be active and healthy. Staff recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with good opportunities to be outside. The children had access to a variety of engaging and challenging resources and activities, for example, open-ended and natural resources, mud kitchen, digging area, fire pit, messy area and the literacy cabin. This supported children to develop their problem-solving skills and spark curiosity in their play experiences. Parents were overall very happy with the environment, one parent commented, ' The nursery has an excellent environment which nurtures exploration and learning through play and has excellent outdoor facilities'.

During the inspection, the children and staff told us they grow herbs and vegetables in the garden and use these foods for snack/lunches. The manager and staff showed us evidence of the children getting involved in lighting the fire pit and preparing and cooking their snacks on the fire. Staff supported children well ensuring a good balance between maintaining a safe environment and allowing children to learn about fire safety and to manage risks. This supported children to build confidence and gain a sense of responsibility.

Children were given access to outdoor play with opportunities for risky play and development of gross and fine motor skills. Staff worked well together and with children to identify and talk about risks within the setting. Children were being actively encouraged by staff to risk assess the outdoor area before they went outside as well as risk assess some of the equipment they played on. For example, staff supported children to risk assess an outdoor experience and used skilled questioning to support children to look at possible risks and consider reasonable safety measures. As a result, children were able to continue their play and be aware of how to keep themselves and others safe.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and staff. This included supporting children with good hygiene practices to minimise the risk of spreading infection.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The management and staff team led in the development of quality assurance and improvement plans within the setting.

The management team and staff all worked together to ensure a positive ethos within the service. They maintained regular open communication through newsletters, google classroom, phone calls and verbal feedback at the end of the day. Parents seemed very happy about the service, one parent commented that "I cannot fault the flexibility and the structure from the leadership of the service. Catriona has always been so easy and friendly to deal with". We found that this promoted inclusion and allowed parents and carers the opportunity to see how their child's learning is developing through play in the nursery.

Quality assurance and an ethos of continuous improvement were evident throughout the setting, with the management team and staff working hard to develop children's experiences. A quality assurance calendar was in place that ensured audits of various aspects of the nursery were routinely carried out. However, families had not yet been involved in a meaningful way to inform change as well as seeking families' views as part of their self-evaluation procedure. The service should now consider reviewing processes to consult with parents and identify what's working well to support improvement and the outcomes for children in the service. This will support the service to identify future priorities in collaboration with children and families.

The staff team worked well together, and staff welcomed feedback and suggestions for improvement. Staff were encouraged to be part of the service development and reflect on their practice together. This showed the service were committed to improving outcomes for children.

Team meetings took place weekly where small groups of staff came together to reflect on practice, and be involved in making decisions and improvements. We suggested that it would be beneficial for all the staff team to come together regularly to work together and support one another to implement positive changes with a shared responsibility.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

4.3 Staff deployment

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.

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them well. They recognised that continuity of care was important for children. Keyworking arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions for children and communication with families.

Parents were very complimentary of the staff team some comments included:

"Absolutely fantastic team! Every single one of them".
"The team are fantastic and know my child individually. They are approachable and the children all feel so at ease with them".

Staff worked well together as a team and their differing skills and knowledge complimented one another and resulted in quality interactions with children. They communicated well with each other and worked together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day.

Staff were appropriately deployed throughout the day which ensured they met all children's needs at the right time. Transitions were seamless and well planned with children being comfortable about what was happening next. Staff were effectively supported by the management team and the senior early years practitioner who spent regular time in the nursery. This contributed to trusting and respectful working relationships within the team.

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?	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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