Heathhall School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Herries Avenue
Heathhall
Dumfries
DG1 3QZ

Telephone: 01387 702 590

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 November 2023

Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003501

Service no:
CS2010237926

About the service

Heathhall nursery may provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children at any one time aged between 3 years and not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is located in a residential area in Heathhall, Dumfries within Dumfries and Galloway. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities. Children are accommodated in one large open plan playroom and large enclosed outdoor play space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20th and 21st November 2023. 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with people using the service and eight of their family
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and nurturing care from a responsive staffing team.
- Children were at the heart of any improvements in the service.
- Families were welcomed into the nursery by the manager and team.
- The team should continue to embed and develop the planning cycle within the nursery.
- The manager should continue to embed quality assurances processes with the nursery.

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?	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? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

On both days of inspection children were happy, settled and having fun with their peers. They experienced warm, patient, and nurturing care from staff which supported their health and wellbeing. Staff were kind and respectful towards children, taking time to listen and respond to them. This helped children to feel valued and secure in the nursery. Children approached staff to play and for help, confident their needs would be met. One parent told us "The nursery is welcoming and accommodating."

Children experienced a rolling snack that enabled them to develop their independence and life skills. Children were supervised to choose, prepare, and self-serve their own snack with friends. Play was not interrupted as staff were mindful when asking children when they would like to have snack.

Children experienced mealtimes that were sociable and unhurried. Food provided was nutritious and in line with current guidance. On the first day of the inspection, we made some suggestions on how to develop the lunchtime routine to ensure positive and meaningful experiences for children. Staff implemented some of these suggestions on the second day, such as supervising children to wash their hands, allowing children the freedom to choose their own seat and sitting with children while they ate. The team should continue with plans to further improve and enrich the mealtime experience for children in their care.

Staff knew children well and could tell us about their individual needs and personalities. We sampled personal plans and all about me forms and found they contained lots of useful information. However, some plans did not contain clear next steps and strategies or incorporate children's own requests for learning. We discussed this with the manager and are satisfied this process will be developed which would support effective planning and tracking of children's achievements. Most parents strongly agreed with our question staff know my child well, including what they like and what is important for their care.

Children's health and wellbeing were supported by a robust medication policy and procedure. We sampled the nursery's medication policy and consent forms and found these were in line with current good practice guidance.

Children were supported to be safe and receive the right supports by the manager and staff who recognised the benefits of collaborating with parents and other agencies. Regular communication with other key agencies ensured the team had up to date information to support children's current needs and any important changes in their life.

Children were leading their play throughout the days of inspection. They could make choices about where they wanted to play, what they wanted to play and who the wanted to play with. We observed children engage in spontaneous play and learning opportunities throughout the nursery, supported by responsive staff.

Children could engage in planned play and learning activities. On the day of inspection, the children engaged in a Child Smile session and were confident to tell us about healthy teeth and show us the stickers they had received. TLQ sessions were also planned and lead by the team with small groups of children.

Staff recorded children's ideas and suggestions for new activities on a whiteboard within the playroom and in big books. However, planning approaches required to be further developed to ensure children's next steps were incorporated into the planning cycle. Staff, in partnership with the children should also evaluate and record outcomes following each activity in the big books.

Children were supported by staff who had a good understanding and knowledge of development, theory, and practice. Staff were skilled at knowing when to engage and when to stand back and observe children's play. Staff were also skilled at supporting children to problem solve through effective questioning.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Children accessed an environment that was homely, warm, and welcoming. There was lots of natural light and ventilation through large windows and doors in the playroom. The space continued to be developed in collaboration with the children, staff, and the early years team.

Children could access different toys and resources within areas of the playroom for example a home corner, block play, craft table, and water tub. However, on the first day of inspection we highlighted children's ability to extend their play and learning had been impacted as some areas needed to be refreshed and restocked. There were some improvements made on the second day of inspection and we encouraged the manager and team to regularly review resources, children's engagement, and provocations available to ensure high quality play and learning experiences.

Free flow access between the indoors and enclosed outdoor space, except for lunchtime, enhanced children's abilities to lead their play and learning. One child told us "I like the grass and the toys and playing outside."

Infection prevention and control measures were in place in line with current guidelines. We discussed the importance of children and staff regularly washing their hands throughout the day. Toilets and changing areas were clean and accessible for children. The setting had an adequate supply of personal protective equipment which was stored appropriately.

We sampled the nursery's risk assessments and found they were in line with current guidance. Mitigations were considered and shared with the team. We have highlighted the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA guidance to further develop children and staff's understanding of managing potential risks in the nursery. All parents we spoke to told us they felt their child was safe at the nursery.

As digital technology was included in the nursery's improvement plan, we have requested the manager create a safe use or internet safety policy for children and families.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

A clear vision, values and aims had been recently reviewed and updated for the service in collaboration with the children and their families. The children had led the creation of the new values, this showed us their rights were respected and their voices listened to by the team. This also empowered children at Heathhall nursery to lead their play and learning.

Children were supported by staff and a manager who embedded the nurseries values into their practice. Staff spoke passionately about working with families to help every child reach their full potential at the nursery and were open to our suggestions for improvement.

Children were at the heart of any changes and improvements in the nursery. The team met weekly to discuss what was working well and share new ideas. We encouraged the team to use the care inspectorate's self-evaluation toolkit and quality framework to consider the key questions; what we are doing, how do we know and what can we improve on. This will support the team to further embed a culture of self-reflection and support them on their improvement journey.

The manager was warm, welcoming, and approachable in the setting to children, families, and staff. She created conditions in the nursery where people felt confident to discuss their ideas, opinions or if needed concerns. All parents we spoke to strongly agreed the manager was visible and supportive.

The manager, in partnership with staff, should continue to develop quality assurance processes which will support sustained improvements in the service. This should include further development of the lunchtime routine and environment. Streamlining tracking of children's learning to ensure children's next steps and strategies are clear and consistent. Revisiting planning approaches to ensure children's next steps are incorporated into activities within the playroom.

Views of families and children were actively sought and valued by the team. This was achieved through newsletters, evaluation forms and face to face discussion. Information received was then discussed as a team and used to inform further developments within the nursery.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

Children's health, wellbeing and safety needs were met as the nursery was appropriately staffed on the days of inspection. The staff and manager worked effectively as a team to ensure continuity of care, this minimised the impact of staff breaks or unplanned absences for children during their time at nursery. One child told us "I like my teachers."

Staff were highly committed to their roles, and they talked passionately about supporting children to be happy and have fun at Heathhall nursery. Staff communicated well with each other, they used kind words and interacted respectfully, presenting positive role models for children in their care. One parent told us the staff "are all friendly and approachable."

Staff were skilled and discussed utilising each other strengths as a team to support high quality play and learning for children in their care. Staff also took responsibility for their own professional development and embraced any new opportunities to learn.

Staff spoke positively about working in Heathhall nursery and told us they felt supported, listened to and able to share their ideas with colleagues and managers. This promoted a positive ethos within the team and nursery. All parents we spoke told us the team were the real strength in the nursery.

All staff were appropriately registered with the Scottish Social Services Council.

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

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