Stenhousemuir Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Stenhousemuir Primary School
Rae Street
Stenhousemuir
Larbert
FK5 4QP

Telephone: 01324 503 440

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 December 2022

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2010238823

About the service

Stenhousemuir Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 64 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is located in Stenhousemuir, near Larbert, and is set within a purpose-built building within the grounds of Stenhousemuir Primary School. The environment consisted of the main playroom, a quiet sensory room, kitchen area, children's toilets, and a cloak room. Children were able to directly access the enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 1 December 2022 between 08:30 and 17:30. 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, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children using the service and six parents
- spoke with staff
- observed practice and daily life including staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children and families were warmly welcomed into the service.
- Staff knew children well and worked as a team to consistently meet the individual needs of children.
- The service had identified areas for improvement including continuing to review and develop mealtimes, and to include the voice of children in their personal plans.
- The service should review and develop transitions to ensure children experience a calm and nurturing environment throughout the day.
- The service should review and develop the environment to ensure children consistently benefit from a rich play and learning environment.

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support
Children and families felt valued in their nursery because their care and support was delivered in a warm, kind and compassionate way. They were warmly welcomed as they entered the service. Staff listened to children and supported them to manage their feelings using calm and effective communication including the use of visual aids. Parents said they 'felt welcome and were able to chat with key staff when they dropped off and collected their children.'

Staff understood the importance of helping children to feel safe and secure. Where needed, extended arrangements were supporting children to settle from home into nursery, or nursery into school. This supported them to feel safe. Staff recognised that secure attachments led to children becoming confident and resilient.

Staff knew children well responding to their individual care and support needs in a nurturing and sensitive way. Consultation with families meant they were included in agreeing the care and support for their children. Information was entered into the personal plan for each child and shared across the staff team through 'huddle' meetings to ensure consistency of care and support. The service had identified personal plans as an area for improvement. They aimed to develop personal plans to include the voice of the child ensuring their care and support is right for them.

Medication was mostly managed well supporting the health and wellbeing of children. We asked the service to review the information for each child to ensure all medication records show that consideration has been given to any potential risk, and that instructions to guide staff in their role in administering medication are easily accessible. This will ensure children are safe and healthy.

Mealtimes provided children with unhurried, sociable experiences. Staff sat with children chatting and positively role modelling social behaviours. Children were developing life skills and independence when pouring drinks, self-serving food, and when involved in cooking and baking activities. These experiences helped raise children's awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. The service aimed to continue to review and develop mealtimes to ensure a quality experience for children. We would support this and asked that staff review and develop the outdoor snack experience to ensure the safety of children when eating outdoors. **(See area for improvement 1).**

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning
Children were leading their own play and learning through a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences. They had choice and independence of where they wanted to play and how they would lead their play both indoors and outdoors. Staff were responsive to children's interests. They used various opportunities throughout the day to ask children their views, and listened to them. Staff respected children's choices of where they would like to play and with whom they played, adapting opportunities to fit their ideas. For example, some children had shown an interest in making a post box. Staff observed this and worked collaboratively with the children to build on this learning together. They explored how they could design and make a post box documenting their learning in the floor book. This resulted in children feeling listened to and valued.

For the majority of the day, children were happy and engaged during their play and learning. Some staff responded well to children's interests, using skilled interactions to extend their learning through, for example, effective questions. The service should build on their approach to effective questioning to ensure that all staff follow a similar approach. Children were keen to learn and experiment with different materials. Staff gave praise and recognition, and celebrated children's achievements, which helped enhance children's confidence. The service should review and develop the environment to ensure children consistently benefit from a rich play and learning environment. Children had access to free flow play between the outdoor and indoor environment through most of the day. This ensured they could be active and benefit from regular fresh air and exercise.

Staff showed a good awareness of child development and knew the children in the setting. They spoke confidently about the children's learning and knew their individual needs and interests well. Systems were in place to monitor and record children's progress including learning journals. These were accessed by children and families so they felt included. We encouraged the setting to continue to develop their approach recording children's learning and next steps, including the child's voice.

Areas for improvement

1. Staff should ensure mealtimes are always managed in a safe and supportive way. The service should at a minimum, review and develop mealtimes to ensure children are always closely supervised by staff so they enjoy safe, happy, and healthy mealtime experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I am protected from harm because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing, that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm' (HSCS 3.12).

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefited from a comfortable and welcoming environment that was clean and well ventilated. There were some areas that supported children to relax and spend time alone or in small groups, including the sensory room at the rear of the main playroom. Children were busy and having fun most of the time as they engaged in their learning. We would encourage the staff team to continue to reflect on how children use the areas in the playroom. Making changes that children find interesting will support them to be curious. Staff should be mindful of the environmental impact on children's experiences. This includes the impact of lighting, noise levels, and the benefits for children when they have access to the outdoor area across the whole of their nursery session.

Children had free access to the outdoor garden for large periods during the day. Staff recognised the positive impact being outdoors had on the children's wellbeing. Children had opportunities to develop gross motor skills as they climbed and balanced on loose parts, and had fun as they played imaginatively in the mud area. Staff ensured the safety of children in the garden by undertaking daily risk assessments. Children were learning to stay safe through conversations with staff when involved in risky play experiences. They had enjoyed toasting marshmallows on the fire pit, and were reminded about the wooden planks being slippy when wet as they balanced and walked along them. Staff were working towards increasing the risky play opportunities for children including the introduction of a work bench. We would encourage this development through staff using a risk benefit approach.

Staff implemented infection prevention and control routines to keep children healthy and safe. Hand washing was promoted, however, we would encourage the service to consider an outdoor hand washing facility to support the positive outdoor snack experience.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The statement of vison, values, and curriculum rationale of the service had been reviewed including the views of the children, and this was shared with families so they knew what the service offered, making them feel included in their child's development. The vision was 'Enjoy learning. Achieve success.' and the values included 'Kindness, confidence, friendship.'

The senior leadership team had developed systems and processes to support quality assurance and self-evaluation. They had identified what was working well and what needed to be improved. We suggested they included how the improvement would be made and what next, giving consideration to best practice. This will support the culture of continued improvement as they promote positive outcomes for children and families. An area for improvement identified was to increase the voice of children and families in evaluating their nursery experience. We suggested this could be done using 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school-aged childcare' asking effective questions through digital technology.

The senior leadership team demonstrated a commitment of pastoral care to the staff team promoting a positive ethos, and were focussed on building and maintaining relationships with children and families. This meant staff, children, and families felt valued and respected in the service. Staff were encouraged to reflect on their practice and had opportunities for professional dialogue through meetings including regular 'Huddle' meetings. They were being supported to take on leadership roles including developing the outdoors and the workbench. We would encourage the service to formalise the role of the staff team in the self-evaluation process to support them to realise the role they have in identifying and making improvements to support the development of quality outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

4.2: Staff recruitment Evaluation

Children benefited from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them well. They recognised that continuity of care was important for children. There were sufficient staff in place to ensure children were effectively supported for most of their session. Staff worked well together as a team. Their differing skills, knowledge, and experience allowed them to support one another resulting in a consistent approach in the care and support provided for children.

Effective communication meant staff worked well together to ensure good supervision of children across the day. This contributed to children being respected and created a positive team ethos within the service.

Appropriate policies were in place to maximise attendance and the senior leadership team was found to be supportive of staff. A positive ethos around attendance was in place. Staff spoke of the good relationships that had been formed within the team. Parents commented on the positive relationships in the service and the warm approachable staff team.

Busier times of the day, such as mealtimes and arrival and departure times, were recognised and planned for so that children felt safe and secure. However, these times still felt busy and noisy. We discussed how the pace of the day and deployment of staff could enhance these experiences for children.

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 provider should ensure that staff's personal mobile phones are not used for photographing nursery children. This is to ensure appropriate safeguarding and confidentiality.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2 - A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 6 February 2018.

Action taken since then

The area for improvement was rectified immediately and practice found at this inspection was appropriate.

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
1.4 Family engagement	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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