Achiltibuie Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Achiltibuie Primary School
Achiltibuie
Ullapool
IV26 2YG

Telephone: 01854 622 267

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 November 2022

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2013314960

About the service

Achiltibuie Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 10 children, from the age of three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is operated by Highland Council. The head teacher manages the nursery. The nursery operates term time only. The nursery is located in a classroom within Achiltibuie Primary School. The children have access to a bright playroom with kitchen area and shared toilet facilities with the primary school children. The children had full access to the school grounds.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 8th November 2022 between 9:30 and 15:45. 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 two people using the service
- spoke with three staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced extremely warm, caring and nurturing support from staff.
- Children were all very happy, confident and actively involved in leading their play and learning.
- Outdoor play and learning was a strength of the service and was very popular with the children.
- Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care and effective partnerships.
- The indoor and outdoor environments were clean, bright and welcoming and of a high quality.
- Staff were flexible and worked well as a team which supported positive experiences for children.
- The manager and staff were committed to the ongoing development of the service.

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

1.1 - Nurturing care & support

Children were very happy, settled and having fun as they played alongside or with friends. They had developed strong bonds with staff members and experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure. There was a great deal of chatter and laughter between the children and the staff. We saw staff being very nurturing, taking time to listen to and respond to children, and offering comfort, cuddles and reassurance when needed. Children felt welcomed. valued and included.

There were personal plans in place which provided detailed information, including strategies and next steps to support individual children. This information was used consistently and effectively by staff. Being a very small service meant that staff knew the individual care and support needs and interests of each of the children attending. Activities and experiences were responsive and planned to meet these needs and interests. This meant that all children were respected and valued as individuals.

Children and families benefitted from a service that valued the importance of partnership working to support children. Staff worked in partnership with families when developing personal plans and support strategies. This ensured that children received appropriate levels of consistent care and support. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time as well as online updates.

Children experienced positive snack and lunchtime experiences which were very relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Children had opportunities to be independent at snack times. Children participated in snack preparation, cutting up fruit and pouring their own drinks. Both snack and lunch times took place in the school dining hall. Staff sat with children chatting and modelling healthy eating, creating opportunities for children to develop their language and social skills. This contributed to creating a homely, relaxed and enjoyable mealtime experience for children.

1.3 Play and Learning

The children were very happy and engaged in their play. They actively led their play and learning throughout the day. They benefited from a high-quality play and learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. They were provided with play and learning opportunities that impacted positively on their development, health, wellbeing and happiness. For the majority of the time children benefitted from uninterrupted play allowing them to become absorbed in their play and have fun. This increased children's happiness and engagement.

Planning approaches were child led and responsive. Play spaces were well resourced and promoted learning through real life experiences. There was a good balance of spontaneous and planned activities. Children were offered exciting, stimulating and interesting experiences which promoted curiosity, imagination and collaborative play. Staff were adding further value to children's play and learning through their carefully considered interactions. Questioning by staff encouraged children to think independently and to reflect, as a result children were respected, valued and achieving.

The children presented as very happy, confident individuals. For example, outdoors we saw the children very engaged in their play at the sand pit and at the construction area where they were actively involved in problem solving, physical exercise and some risk assessment. Both activities were effectively and skilfully supported by staff to promote children's learning and develop skills in language, numeracy, problem solving and risk assessment.

Children benefitted from close links with the local community which enhanced play and learning opportunities for the children. They had weekly outings to the beach and other local areas for outdoor learning sessions. They were also very much an integral part of the wider school community.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a setting that was very welcoming, clean, and inviting. The playroom was comfortable and homely and benefitted from plenty of natural light and ventilation. Furniture and resources were of a high standard and organised to support free flow play indoors. This all promoted a strong sense that children matter.

There was a system to report any repairs and damaged items were promptly replaced. Infection prevention and control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. There were appropriate risk assessments in place which promoted the safety of the children as well as daily checks of the premises.

Children benefitted from access to a well-resourced and carefully set out indoor play space. Staff had created a very positive learning environment. We saw children who explored happily and were engaged in their play. Consideration had been given to the variety of activities and experiences on offer to spark the children's curiosity and imagination. Children led their play and were able to independently select resources of their choice. Areas within the indoor play space had been set up to reflect the children's current interests and curiosities, with appropriate materials, including natural and open ended resources, to support learning and offer challenge.

The outdoor area had been well thought out and offered children a fun and stimulating space where they could comfortably engage with a variety of creative, open ended and natural resources. The outdoor space, supported children to develop their gross and fine motor skills as well as their numeracy and literacy skills. The children had taken part in planting and growing activities. All the children enjoyed spending much of their time outdoors. They were fully engaged in a range of activities, either on their own or with their friends. Children were having fun playing imaginatively in the large sand pit and with the construction equipment. We observed children taking turns, sharing, talking, negotiating and problem solving. Staff supported children to direct their own play and activities in the way they chose.

Given the very rural location of the nursery on the West coast, the opportunities for outdoor play and learning were plentiful and full advantage were made of these by the nursery. Staff took a positive risk benefit approach, and this supported children to assess their own risks and understand their own safety. Robust risk assessments were in place. These were regularly reviewed and updated to ensure any risks were minimised for children, families, and staff. Regular head counts took place and robust measures were in

place to keep children safe
while out on their regular outdoor learning sessions in the local community.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

There were clear visions, values and aims for the service and the manager, staff and families were all included when these were reviewed. Children benefitted from a positive ethos and culture of continuous improvement. Effective policies, procedures and quality assurance processes were in place to support the development and improvement of the service. The manager and staff were all enthusiastic and committed to the ongoing development of the service to secure positive outcomes for the children. Staff were reflective and keen to improve both their individual and organisational practice.

Parents and children were routinely involved in the ongoing evaluation of the service. Consulting and listening to the children and their families was a priority for the manager and staff. Involving children and their families meaningfully in the continuous improvement of the service contributed to them feeling included.

Regular communication with families took place through a variety of methods, including email, online platforms, questionnaires and face to face discussion. The service used parental feedback to develop experiences for children. This helped to promote a shared partnership in the delivery of high quality care for children.

Staff were also very much involved in the evaluation process. They were supported to reflect on the service provided, evaluate learning opportunities and resources available. This resulted in children experiencing a rich learning environment which encouraged them to be creative and curious. There were regular staff meetings and staff were able to give any feedback or suggestions they might have about the service and outcomes for children.

The nursery staff felt valued and well supported by the manager and another teacher. They visited the nursery at least twice a week and completed both informal and formal monitoring. Evaluation within the service was underpinned by best practice guidance and supported high quality care and support. Management and staff had a very good understanding of 'How good is our early learning and childcare' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare' and used these to support assessment and evaluation within the service.

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.

4.3 Staff deployment

The staff were very caring and nurturing. They were enthusiastic and committed to providing a positive experience for the children in their care. Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. They were

warm, friendly and sensitive in their approach and demonstrated positive team working which promoted a happy and secure environment for children. They were responsive and respectful of children during interactions and play which supported children to feel safe and secure.

Children experienced continuity of care as staff deployed themselves effectively to ensure high quality experiences throughout the day. They were flexible in their deployment which supported children to lead their play and engage in free flow opportunities whilst remaining safe. Staff worked very 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. Transitions were seamless and well planned with children being comfortable about what was happening next. Children were encouraged to feel included, respected and valued as they understood the routines of the day.

As a small service in a very rural location, the staff knew the families well and worked to ensure every family was welcomed and valued. This contributed to creating a caring ethos with a strong sense of community and family within the setting. Staff had regular communication with parents and had established positive relationships which enhanced children's experiences and promoted a partnership approach. Having good communication with families contributed to parents feeling included in their child's experiences at nursery and assisted staff when identifying how best to meet children's needs.

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
DD1 4NY

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