Calderbank Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Main Street
Calderbank
Airdrie
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Telephone: 01236 632 084

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 January 2024

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2015336180

About the service

Calderbank Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children at any one time aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. Care is provided from two spacious playrooms in a self-contained wing in Calderbank Primary School, which is located in Calderbank, North Lanarkshire. Children have direct access to a large outdoor play area.

The service is situated close to shops, parks and other amenities.

The primary school and nursery class are both managed by the headteacher, who oversees the management, supervision and day to day running of the service. The principal teacher and lead practitioner also form part of the management team.

The service is provided by North Lanarkshire Council.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 20 and 21 January 2024. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke with most of the children attending the service and spoke with two parents/carers during our visit. Three parents/carers also responded to the Care Inspectorate's survey.
- Spoke with staff and the management team.
- Spoke with two visiting professionals.
- Observed practice.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They knew children very well and worked closely with parents/carers and professional agencies to ensure their needs were being met effectively.

• Children had opportunities to engage in a good balance of spontaneous and planned play experiences which supported their learning in language, literacy and numeracy.

• Children could move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments which promoted choice and independence.

• Children's play spaces would benefit from regular monitoring, ensuring areas are well resourced to support children's comfort, play and learning experiences.

• Some areas of the nursery are in need of some attention.

• Management were committed to supporting improvement. Staff would benefit from opportunities to further develop leadership skills.

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/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and support.

We found children received very good nurturing care and support in this service.

Children were very happy, settled and content in the setting. They very much enjoyed spending time in their nursery and confidently spoke to us about what they liked to do. Playing with their friends and outdoor play were particular favourites. Children had formed special friendships and were able to choose when and where they spent time with them.

Children happily and enthusiastically entered the nursery and were warmly greeted by caring staff. It was clear positive, trusting relationships had been formed between children and staff.

Staff were kind and had a calm, gentle manner, which supported children to feel safe and secure. Staff interactions were extremely kind, caring and warm. They were responsive to children's needs and made positive efforts to ensure they were at children's level when supporting and interacting with them. A parent/carer told us, "The staff are lovely, welcoming and nurturing."

Children had a key worker who was responsible for their care and wellbeing. This relationship helped children to feel safe and secure in the setting. While there had been some changes to the staff team, longer term staff ensured consistency of care for children, which is important for their overall wellbeing.

Staff knew children and their families very well. They shared with us how they gathered information about children's needs and planned for them. Personal plans provided a very good overview of each child and how their needs were being supported. It was clear that parents/carers were involved in planning for their child and plans were reviewed regularly with them. Online learning journals were a particularly good way of sharing children's nursery experiences with them. A parent /carer commented, "Staff were very helpful and understanding during a tough time in our lives and continue to help support my child overcome some difficulties."

Where children required additional support, staff worked very effectively with a range of partner agencies to support their development and identify next steps in their learning. Visiting professionals told us about the positive collaborative working with staff, the positive relationships that had been developed and how they were highly committed to ensuring that children received the support they required. They commented, "the team are always very supportive to families and I always feel that the go the extra mile to ensure every need is being met within our shared GIRFEC goals. Staff are always supportive of partner agencies and it really is a pleasure to work with them as I know they are working hard to strive for the best possible outcome in a child's journey."

We observed supportive and effective strategies being used throughout the day. This included the use of Makaton and visual supports, which helped children to communicate their needs and wishes and help their understanding of routines.

Suitable systems were in place to manage medication and staff had a good understanding of children's health needs.

Snack and mealtimes had been significantly improved since the last inspection and were very positive experiences for children. These opportunities were relaxed and unhurried social occasions where children's independence was fully supported. Staff sat with children, chatting to them about their day and were close by to support when needed. Lunch was appetising, nutritious and healthy and children ate this well. Children's special dietary needs had also been well considered.

Parents/carers had meaningful opportunities to be involved in nursery life. Staff engaged in conversations when they arrived and departed the service. Stay and Play sessions, woodland walks and social events, for example, a 'Biscuits and Blether' group ensured parents/carers could attend the service and observe their child at play. This helped management and staff to develop and maintain positive relationships and work in partnership with them. Parents/carers spoke very highly about the communication methods used by the service.

Staff had a clear understanding of their role in protecting children and the service's child protection policy and procedures were used to support and guide them. Most staff had recently attended child protection training, with newer staff being provided with a good overview as part of their induction. The management team understood their responsibilities and the systems that were in place to report any concerns. As a result, children were safe and protected from harm.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and busy during their play and had lots of fun with staff and their friends. Children engaged enthusiastically in child-initiated activities both indoors and out and could mostly independently choose where they wanted to play. A parent/carer commented, "The nursery offer some great opportunities to play and learn indoors and outdoors."

Children were well supported to lead their play. They had fun, were excited and motivated to learn. Staff had created a positive learning environment where children's play was valued and respected. They were responsive and enthusiastic to children's ideas and their observations, interactions and effective questioning enhanced children's learning. Children benefitted from engaging in activities that involved mark making, colour recognition, making links to letters and using numbers in play situations.

Block play was particularly good and we observed children being creative and imaginative when creating their structures. Story telling was a favourite with the children. A well-resourced, cosy space had been created, where children gathered to read stories with their friends using puppets and props. Staff were trained to deliver specific learning programmes, for example 'The Three Read' approach, which promoted reading for enjoyment and supported children's language development.

Play areas generally well resourced. We encouraged the service to continue to ensure children have access to a wide range of quality toys, resources and real-life materials across all areas to extend their play.

Staff understood the importance of outdoor play to children's health, wellbeing and development. Outdoor play experiences were particularly good and children could access the outdoor space independently in all weathers. We observed children playing their favourite games, splashing in puddles and engaging in more risky and challenging play. Children also had regular opportunities to access natural woodland areas in the local community. They were enthusiastic when showing us photographs of recent trips where their parents/

carers had accompanied them. This helped enrich children's learning, develop life skills and helped them develop positive links with their community.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

Quality indicator 2.2: High quality facilities.

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

The setting was warm, inviting and comfortable. Homely touches, such as displays, soft furnishings and furniture helped create a welcoming environment for children and their families. A parent/carer commented, "This is a safe, nurturing environment for the children."

Suitable security arrangements were in place to ensure children's safety. Staff ensured children were always accounted for and systems were in place to monitor their whereabouts.

Displays and materials in neutral colours were used to help create a calm, nurturing space for children. Large windows provided the playroom with plenty of natural light and ventilation.

Playrooms had been generally well considered and took account of children's interests and development. Children had access to a good range of play resources to support their play. Staff had developed some quiet, cosy spaces where children had space to rest, refresh and self-regulate when needed. We asked the manager to continue to evaluate the quality of play spaces, to ensure that they meet children's needs and offer stimulation and challenge.

Children had direct access to a spacious, stimulating outdoor learning space. This was an interesting space with different surfaces and resources for children to develop and practise key skills. For example, children had opportunities to develop physical skills and manage risk for themselves. Children also benefited from accessing the primary school's wider play spaces.

We identified some improvements that were needed across the setting. We were reassured by the swift and positive action taken by the manager and staff during our visit and their commitment to take forward the improvements that were required. While risk assessments had been completed which demonstrated how staff identified and minimised risks to children, we suggested this process could be more robust to ensure that staff are identifying the issues similar to those found during our visit. We saw children and staff made good efforts to ensure hand hygiene practices were carried out and that children were mostly supported to do this well. However, we noted the water temperature was very cool and may not have been comfortable for handwashing. To minimise the risk of spread of infection and to support children to learn good hand hygiene habits, we recommended this is monitored (see area for improvement 1.)

Areas for improvement

1.
To ensure children's safety, health and wellbeing, the provider, manager and staff should ensure all areas of the setting are safe, well maintained and cleaned to a high standard.

This should include, but not limited to:

- Ensuring water temperatures are consistently suitable for handwashing
- Reviewing handwashing facilities in the children's changing area
- Ensuring repairs are carried out timeously and fixtures and fittings are well maintained
- Ensuring areas are robustly risk assessed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led.

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

There were a range of quality assurance processes in place to ensure children experienced good outcomes. There was a clear management structure where the head teacher had the overall responsibility for the nursery and was supported by the principal teacher and lead practitioner.

The manager valued staff and was committed to ensuring they were happy, motivated and supported to carry out their role effectively. They spoke very highly of staff and were clearly very proud of them. The manager had a good overview of the service's strengths and the improvements that were still needed to improve the quality of the service. The manager and staff had worked hard to make some meaningful improvements to the setting, which were having a positive impact on children and their families, for example mealtimes and planning for children's learning. The management team were visible and visited the playroom frequently. This enabled them to play a key role in promoting good practice. Management were supported by the local authority quality officer to make improvements to the service.

The service's improvement plan set out clear and relevant priorities to be taken forward which was supported by self-evaluation processes. Parents/carers and staff's views had been sought and informed the ongoing development of the service. Management have agreed to continue to further develop robust quality assurance processes to help them monitor and identify improvements that are needed across the service.

Staff had opportunities to engage in regular professional development reviews and have their work appraised by the manager. They told us they found this a very positive experience which provided recognition of their hard work and opportunities to discuss professional development needs.

There was a commitment to using staff's strengths, interests and skills to lead on specific areas of practice, to support this process. The manager recognised this was an area to be explored further and taken forward. This would help staff to develop a sense of ownership of the setting's improvement journey and how they contribute to this. We highlighted the Step into Leadership resources available on the Scottish Social Services Council's website (SSSC).

The service used some effective methods to involve parents/carers in developing the service. For example, regular newsletters, having opportunities to contribute to children's learning journals and sharing their feedback on events. This helped keep them up to date and helped them be involved in the life of the service. The service should continue to provide meaningful and effective ways to consult with children and their

families about how the service could be improved. This will ensure the service continues to meet their needs and expectations.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff Deployment.

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

Staff were enthusiastic about their role and spoke very positively about their work. They worked well together to create a warm, welcoming environment for children and their families. Staff engaged very well with us and were confident, open and professional in their discussions.

Staff were kind, caring and very nurturing in their interactions with the children. They were respectful and affectionate towards the children. They told us that they wanted the very best for them and their families. A parent/carer commented, "The staff are all very friendly and approachable and always happy to answer any questions."

Throughout the session staff took time to listen, respond, and care for children, which helped them feel safe, secure and valued. While adult/child ratios were maintained and children's needs were consistently met, we found there were times when additional staff would have ensured children had full access to all areas of the nursery. The manager shared how some recent staff absences had been challenging. A parent/carer also highlighted this to us. However, a more settled and consistent staff team was now in place. The manager and staff ensured parents/carers were informed of any staff changes. This supported children and families to build trusting relationships and have confidence in the people who care for them. A parent/carer told us, "The staff when they are all in the building seem to work great together."

Staff worked well as a team, offered support where needed and were professional, courteous and supportive. Staff discussed their participation in training and how this had improved their practice and impacted positively on children's experiences.

Staff should continue to explore different types of training and professional learning opportunities that are available to them. This would enable them to access a variety of training that best meets their professional needs. This should include training to support children's health needs if required. We highlighted the Care Inspectorate's HUB, where a wide variety of practice notes and learning programmes are available. The manager has also agreed to give further consideration to First Aid arrangements within the setting.

While staff communicated well, we suggested that they would find it highly beneficial to meet as a team. This would enable them to discuss individual children, share ideas on what was working well in the playrooms and what could be improved, support professional dialogue and sharing of practice.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare, and safety of children. In this instance, the provider must ensure that levels of staffing are sufficient to meet the needs of all children attending the service.

To be completed by: 31 August 2023.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 1.19: My care and support meets my needs and is right for me. This is in order to comply with: Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210)

This requirement was made on 18 April 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement
This requirement was made following an upheld complaint.

While there were some challenges with staff absences, we found that levels of staffing were sufficient to meet the needs of the children attending the service. Most staff knew children and their families very well and children's needs were met in a responsive way. Although a full complement of staff was not yet in place, children's individual needs were met consistently throughout the day.

Met - within timescales

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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