St. David's Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Kippielaw
Lauder Road
Dalkeith
EH22 2PU

Telephone: 01312 714 675

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 October 2023

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Service no:
CS2019373805

About the service

St. David's Primary School Nursery Class is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 40 children aged from 3 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time.

The primary school is situated a residential area in Dalkeith, Midlothian. The nursery is an integral part of the primary school. The premises provides a large playroom with toilets, kitchen facilities and direct access to an outdoor area. Children also use an area close to the school for woodland play experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 October 2023. 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 a number of children in the setting
- reviewed online questionnaires completed by one parent
- spoke with five staff and the management team
- observed staff practice and daily experiences for children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

•Children were happy, secure and loved.

• Further development of the personal planning process to ensure individual strategies were consistently recorded.

• A rich and stimulating environment indoors and outdoors offered children space to explore, discover and experiment at their own pace, within a calm home from home setting.

•Further consideration of the use of the entrance hallway as a play space would enable greater development of a safe, welcoming environment for parents, children and visitors who attend during setting.

•Further consideration of the lunch experience for children could maximise staff deployment and child supervision at meal time.

• Strong leadership and robust quality assurance processes promoted a culture of continuous improvement.

•A consistent staff team who were developing their understanding of reflective practice and their commitment to positive 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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and nurturing care from staff which supported their wellbeing. Children were respected by staff who carried out personal care routines in a sensitive manner. Staff were supportive of children's emotions. They listened to children, provided support, explanation, cuddles, and space, this helped children to express their feelings, be understood, and self-regulate.

A range of documents were used to make up a child's personal plan. These had been updated with parents regularly to ensure that support needs were accurately recoded and strategies developed to improve outcomes for children. Staff could evidence that they knew children very well and describe the individual strategies in place for some children. Some of these needed to be more regularly evaluated. To provide staff with a timeline of significant events, contact with external professionals and identify trends or behaviours staff should develop the use chronologies in children's personal plans.

Children's health and wellbeing needs were met through well organised procedures for medication, the recording of accidents, safeguarding and child protection procedures. Staff were committed to working with parents in order to establish positive working relationships. This helped parents to feel part of the setting and understand their child's nursery experience.

Snacks were well organised and offered children significant opportunities to help prepare food, served themselves and develop independence skills. Overall, lunch time was well organised and children were very familiar with the routine. We have asked that staff and managers carry out an assessment of the lunch experience to ensure the procedure of having lunch in the playroom does not significantly impact on the experiences for children during the lunch period.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children had opportunities to lead their own play. Staff had a good understanding of child development and recognised that children learn in different ways. Planning was both responsive and intentional, and there was good use of provocations to stimulate thinking and extend children's interests. Time was set aside for staff to plan and discuss children's learning experiences and identify learning priorities for each child. This provided staff with a good overview of children's learning progress.

Children were having fun and most were engaged in their chosen activities. Staff were playful and took time to support children's play and they were continuing to develop their skill and expertise to extend children's learning through comments and observations.

Children moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor environments which, when assessed as one learning environment, provided a good range of learning opportunities. Indoors and outdoors children had opportunities to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. The home area was well used for a wide range of role play and children were very engaged in practicing mark making, writing stories and developing cutting skills. The sustained use of the outdoor play environment connected

children with their natural environment. Children talked to us about autumn, birds, animals and their outings to the nearby wooded area.

To provide with reassurance and confidence staff organised the pace of the day to offer predictably timed activities. There were quieter spells with short group times to enable children to reflect on their morning, stories and short gather/singing time before home.

Children's learning was shared with parents through the Seesaw digital platform. This provided parents with an insight into the activities and learning taking place in the setting. Children's individual learning progress was tracked through local authority tools and an evaluation of Learning Journals was taking place to ensure their use and purpose aligns fully with all other assessment, tracking and monitoring.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were welcomed into an inviting and calm setting. Resources were accessible enabling children to lead their own learning. There was plenty of ventilation with free flow access to the outdoors area. Lighting levels had been given thought and were changed during the day to suit children's needs. The environment was sensitively structured to take account of children's age and stage of development and learning. Distinct play areas were set up, these reflected children's interests and celebrated their successes and achievements. There were also cosy areas for children to relax, which meant the environment was structured to support children's wellbeing and development.

Children had access to enough space in the indoor and outdoor environments for their play. Staff had arranged the playroom to provide a warm and welcoming environment. We have asked that consideration is given to the use of the cloakroom as a play space. It was being used as dual purpose area but that impacted on access into the nursery if children were playing at the door, the provision of adequate storage for children's belongings and the provision of a warm and welcoming environment for parents coming into the nursery.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with families. These were audited to identify any recurrent themes which helped keep children safe. Children and staff washed hands regularly and staff engaged in appropriate cleaning of areas and resources throughout the day. We highlighted some increased steps to be taken around infection prevention and control within the changing area. The staff team welcomed this advice and were taking suggestions forward.

Children had opportunities to use areas of the local community for walks and woodland experiences. Children told us that they went to the gym hall to 'run around' and that they had gone to the 'big school assembly'. These opportunities to use the wider school environment enhanced children's familiarity with their local community and the school.

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.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The senior team had worked with staff to develop a clear, shared vision, values and aims for the setting. This vision was now positively informing practice. Staff were empowered and supported to lead on their own interests making use of their individual skill sets. Those we spoke to were passionate about these and reflected on the impact on outcomes for children.

To promote a shared approach to improvement the senior team had dedicated time to staff meetings twice weekly for planning and feedback/pastoral discussions. This was helping to develop consistency of expectations and practice in the staff team. Staff told us that they felt actively involved in decision making and the senior team had spent time allowing and supporting staff to be reflective about their practice and the work of the setting.

The leadership and staff team had a positive and reflective approach to quality assurance. There were improvement plans in place and these were regularly discussed as a team and progress was clearly evidenced and monitored. Changes to methods of working were chosen carefully to ensure that the positive work, going on in the setting, was celebrated and to ensure that changes suited the setting and children attending. Improvements were being made to the processes for moderation of documents such as personal plans and learning journals. This would ensure that consistency in completion could be promoted.

Staff had improved the opportunities for parents to be involved in the setting. A member of staff had taken on a role in the parent participation to increase the involvement. Opportunities such as Stay and Play and the lending library had been re-introduced, and the Seesaw app was being used effectively to share children's daily experiences with parents. There had been a limited response to our questionnaire issued to parents but we could see very good evidence of parents being involved in the assessment of the setting and the opportunities they were given to be involved in the setting.

Staff actively listened to children's views. Planning play and learning focussed on children's comments, experiences and suggestions. Staff spoke about their focus of promoting positive outcomes for all children and how they could support this through their role in the setting.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff had created a positive and welcoming environment for children and families. One parent said, "The staff are lovely and very good with the children." Effective communication between staff ensured that they could work flexibly to meet individual children's needs.

After a period of staff changes the setting now had a consistent staff team. This had significantly improved the shared approach to quality experiences for children.

Staff brought a mix of experience and professional interests to their roles. These skills and interests were being well utilised and developed through the professional development process, Making Performance Matter. Staff had set targets which would benefit their professional development but also the wider

setting. A training plan was in place to ensure that all the core elements such as child protection and first aid were covered but also additional training that would benefit both staff and the setting.

Staff worked well together and tried to ensure that suitable levels of supervision and support were provided for children. We have asked that the lunch process is evaluated to ensure that children can receive the correct level of support whilst staff supervise other children and start their breaks.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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