

Noss Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Ackergill Street
Wick
KW1 5ND

Telephone: 01955 609990

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 14 September 2016

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Care service number:
CS2003013514

About the service

Noss Primary School Nursery is an integral part of a new school formed by bringing together two schools and a playgroup in a new building. The playrooms are light and attractive with adjoining kitchen, cloakroom and toilet space. The building is situated on the old North School playground in a residential area of Wick. Work is still in process to remove the old building and provide car parking space and an all-weather pitch for the school.

The nursery is registered for 60 children and at present has two classes in the morning and one in the afternoon. Children can attend from the term following their third birthday and have either morning or afternoon sessions. In addition there is the option of taking the hours flexibly and having fewer, longer sessions if parents wish. A few children presently stay over lunch time and have a school meal in the dining room with support from the nursery staff.

The service was currently reviewing their aims in line with the extended care now available in Early Learning and Childcare settings.

The Care Inspectorate check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators.

What people told us

On the day of the inspection twelve parents were chatted to informally and all were very pleased with the nursery. They often referred to how much their child enjoyed coming to nursery and how helpful they found the staff. They were pleased the children had access to the outside play area each day and felt there were a suitable range of activities on offer. Feedback on the nursery questionnaires included "I am delighted at how fantastic the staff have been in supporting my child. The ability to build up times has been a great help".

Children were seen to be generally engaged with the activities on offer, outside and inside. They talked about what they were building, enjoyed stories and were happy to play with their friends. They said they liked being outside and playing in the sand and water. Many parents commented on how happy their child was to come each day and how the sharing of information helped them to talk to their child about their day.

We received thirteen Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) from parents and all were happy overall with the service. They felt they and their child had been involved in developing the service by being asked for feedback. Comments included "Very happy with the nursery team. My daughter thoroughly enjoys her time at nursery and looks forward to going each day". "My child was very unsure about going to nursery. The staff spent time with myself and my child to help settle him, because of their great support my child now feels confident and happy each day".

Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed self assessment document from the provider. The provider identified what it thought the service did well and gave examples of improvements they had made to enable greater children's choice and independence, such as free flow and daily access to the outside areas.

They had also increased opportunities for parents to be part of the setting with stay and play days and open afternoons.

The self assessment clearly identified some key areas that they believed can be improved and showed how the service intended to do this. The provider told us how the views of children and parents were taken into account in the self assessment process and how their feedback influenced the development of the plans for improving the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children in the nursery were seen to be settled and confident with staff. Flexible settling in took account of the needs of children and parents and varying patterns of attendance had helped children to settle in at their own pace. Staff were seen to provide a nurturing environment for the children, listening to their ideas and suggestions. They were building up their knowledge of the children through observation and discussion with parents and children. Learning Journeys were in place and starting to be used, although it was too early in the term for these to show a picture of the children and their development. A few children had been involved in identifying their own learning targets, and as the term progresses key workers will be helping children to think about their learning and small targets they would like to achieve.

A free flow snack was on offer to the children for much of the session, although the involvement of the children in the preparation of the snack was limited by the layout of the nursery, which restricted access to the kitchen.

Following discussion with the staff it was hoped to move the snack area to involve the children more in preparation and provide a more social feel to snack time. This would have the additional benefit of taking it away from the entrance to the toilet area and giving additional play space in the room. **(See recommendation 1.)**

Snack options were designed to be healthy and included a variety of fruit each day, with a menu displayed for parents. However, staff were very limited in the extent they could respond to children's wishes and ideas in planning snack due to the ordering process. Many children did not eat the plain yoghurt on offer and were having a very limited snack on the day of the inspection. Milk and water were available to drink and children were encouraged to be independent in pouring and tidying away their dishes.

A few children had a school lunch, as their pattern of attendance included longer days, and they were supported by nursery staff who encouraged them to try new foods. Meal times were a social occasion as the dining room was quiet before the other classes arrived. The numbers staying for lunches was expected to rise as the year progressed and this will help children with transition as they move into primary one.

Staff in the nursery were taking forward children's interests as the basis for working in more depth on topics. They now need to ensure children have more ownership of this process by allowing and encouraging children's creativity and mark making skills throughout the nursery and reflecting this in displays. Undertaking mind mapping or developing nursery rules should always involve the children in recording their ideas on paper, as well as staff scribing. Children's drawings and symbols should be valued as a vital stage in the development of language before children are ready to move on to letter formation.

Children were encouraged to be active through having direct access to the outside area and children were encouraged to be independent in getting dressed for outside play. Outside play gave the children opportunities for social, as well as physical, activities. The gym was also available for active play, but routines could be adapted to build up children's confidence and self-esteem by giving them more responsibility for making choices and leading activities.

The nursery was an inclusive setting for children and families in the area. Staff were aware of the importance of supporting families to help their child enjoy and benefit from their nursery experience. It was often the introduction to school for the family which was the foundation to relationships that were important throughout a child's education.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Arrangements for snack should be reviewed to improve children's involvement in planning and preparing snack.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The nursery was an integral part of the new Noss School building, which opened last-term. There were two playrooms with shared kitchen and toilets, a nappy changing area and a large cloakroom. They had direct access to a nursery garden and shared use of an internal courtyard and the school gym, the library and the school dining room for lunches.

The space was used as one free flow area for much of the session, giving the children greater choice of activities. This allowed resources and space to be used more effectively by creating one craft, construction and writing area, instead of mirroring these in both rooms. This process should continue with better resourced role play areas which could be differentiated between the rooms, a home corner plus a doctor's surgery, a garage or a shop in response to children's ideas.

Children's mark making should be encouraged throughout the nursery, whether in registration, adding their ideas to mind maps and floor books or writing shopping lists in the home corner. Resources to encourage literacy, such as writing materials, should be freely available inside and outside. All children should be helped to develop the skills which will lead to confident writing when they reach that developmental stage, without pressure put on them to write letters before they are at that stage.

The children were kept safe in the nursery with enclosed areas and the supervision of nursery staff. Children were being helped to learn about hazards in the playground and the need to be careful for their own safety and that of the other children. Risk assessments were undertaken by staff to assess and reduce potential hazards during play and on outings.

The book corners in both rooms were not yet cosy and attractive to children. This had been identified by staff who were planning to make the areas more appealing and foster a love of books and reading in the children. They were to provide cushions and materials to soften the area, as well as special lighting to make a more appealing atmosphere for the story corners.

Outside developments were awaited including the erection of a shed to store toys and equipment and more resources for the courtyard. 'Loose parts' such as guttering, planks and pipes would boost the range of problem solving and learning opportunities and challenge children's thinking. The provision of a water tap would increase children's independence and learning, as well as freeing staff time to interact with the children. Child accessible storage for writing and drawing materials would also encourage children's mark making outside. **(See recommendation 1.)**

Throughout the nursery more natural materials would help to foster children's imagination and learning. Shells, bark, stones and fir cones would widen children's connection with the natural world during a range of activities including maths and art. The nursery manager was planning to get the children out more in the community including visits to the local woods.

In the toilet there were five sink areas and only two hand driers, which encouraged children to leave the area with wet hands. In order to prevent the spread of infection paper towels should also be available so that children dry their hands effectively. **(See recommendation 2.)**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Children should be able to access resources to meet all aspects of the curriculum outside.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 11: Access to Resources

2. Paper towel dispensers should be available in the toilets.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Noss Nursery had brought together staff groups from a number of settings, many of whom worked part-time, mainly mornings or afternoons. This allows them to be consistent in their key working responsibilities as this matched children's attendance patterns. Staff had worked well with their new manager to come together as a team and use their strengths to provide a good service for children and families.

Staff were working well together across the rooms which had been opened up to create a free flow space inside and out. This had involved staff in working with an area, rather than their own group of children, and relied on good communication between staff in order to meet the needs of the children. Under the leadership of the manager, staff were adapting to new ways of working in line with good practice guidance which was designed to foster independence and achievement in children by showing respect for their ideas and interests. Staff still need to allow children to lead their learning more and to see themselves as independent learners. As the term goes on and children are settled and aware of routines they should be helped to make more choices, problem solve and lead activities.

Core training needs had been identified and a training plan put in place. Staff had been consulted on their development needs and working groups put together to use their skills to learn from each other and strengthen the work of the nursery. Staff had not yet received training on Building the Ambition and this was an area which had been identified for development through external and in house training. Staff should continue to develop an approach that builds on respect for children's abilities and encourages them to take responsibility for their learning.

Staff had good relationships with parents, as well as a nurturing approach to the children, and all the parents who were talked to during the inspection were happy with the service and praised the efforts of the staff. They found the staff approachable and helpful and thought they provided a wide range of activities for the children. They were pleased with the communication they had with staff and the use of noticeboards to keep them informed.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

A new childcare manager had recently been appointed for the nursery to manage the large staff team, as well as the increasingly flexible approach to children's attendance patterns. The new childcare manager was aware of the importance of building on the strengths of the staff as they change working practice in line with guidance such as Building the Ambition and taking into account the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. The manager was aware that the staff had not yet had Building the Ambition training and was planning to use the training materials to introduce staff to the guidance in the document.

The head teacher was working closely with the childcare manager to build up the staff team and the partnership with parents as important links for the school. The nursery was included in whole school developments, newsletters and the website. Information was shared with parents through the use of a screen in the nursery entrance, showing photos of activities and sharing ideas with parents for use at home.

Staff were being involved in evaluating their skills so they could work together to take forward developments in the nursery. Staff monitoring will take place once the children have settled in and the new free flow routines are embedded. There will also be peer monitoring and annual appraisals as part of a quality assurance calendar. The head teacher and acting principal teacher made regular visits to the nursery on an informal basis and the children were obviously used to interacting with the head teacher when they met.

The manager was trying to ensure that parents were given regular opportunities to give feedback through daily conversations and questionnaires. A settling in questionnaire had been circulated to parents and workshops were planned on aspects of child development and the curriculum. Parents were invited to stay and play sessions, as well as to share interests or activities with the children. Ideas from parents and children were used in evaluations of the nursery, which in turn assisted in the development of the improvement plan.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

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

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

Snacks should be in line with 'Setting the Table' guidance and children should be further involved in choice and preparation of snack.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing

This recommendation was made on 13 January 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Healthy snacks were generally on offer in line with guidance, although children could be more involved in the preparation of snack.

Recommendation 2

Instructions for administration of medication should be in line with Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services, which can be found on the Care Inspectorate website.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This recommendation was made on 13 January 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Detailed parental instructions and written permission would be sought before the storage or administration of medication.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
10 Dec 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
3 Dec 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
22 Jan 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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