

St. Thomas R.C.Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Chapel Street
Keith
AB55 5AL

Telephone: 01542 882256

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 14 September 2017

Service provided by:
The Moray Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001892

Care service number:
CS2003016013

About the service

St. Thomas R.C. Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children at any one time aged two years to those not attending primary school. The service was previously registered and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The service operates from a room at the rear of the school building. It has its own entrance and a small secure courtyard play area is easily accessed from the playroom. The service also has use of the school playing field, gym hall and library.

The aims and objectives of the service include:

- to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children can develop at their own pace
- to encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment
- independence and self-discipline are promoted at all times through the support and positive encouragement of the nursery staff
- we aim to enable all children to achieve their full potential.

We 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, safe, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included (also known as SHANARRI).

What people told us

There was a total of 18 children present during the inspection. We observed the children having fun during play activities which included creative and imaginary play, indoors and outdoors. Children told us that they were having fun, liked painting, playing in the new water tray and being outside. Specific comments included:

"I like nursery."

"I am a queen and have a sticker too."

"We are going outside, yeh."

Five parents returned completed Care Standards Questionnaires. We spoke with four parents face-to-face and one by telephone. They all told us that overall they were very happy with everything, staff were very friendly and caring, their child was enjoying nursery and settling well and children were enjoying nursery. Specific comments included:

"I am really happy and my child loves it."

"They get out and are often muddy, its great."

"Staff really listen and take action."

"All good, a lovely service."

"Staff are good at sharing information."

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance processes. These demonstrated their priorities for development.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

What the service does well

Children experienced a happy and vibrant environment. Play and learning activities such as water play, painting, paper and glue crafts, baking and construction toys helped to capture children's interest. Group activities enabled children to listen to each other and engage in conversation and included stories. Children also enjoyed attending and taking part in the school assembly.

Children's contributions were being valued and respected through their conversations with staff and probing questions during activities, as well as self-directed play. Whilst floor books (to encourage thinking skills through talking together in a group) were in their infancy, staff were keen to embrace the practice in recognition of the benefits of actively involving children in a meaningful way.

Children's physical and emotional wellbeing was being promoted during healthy snack and active play. The recent focus and extension of outdoor play and learning with natural and scrap materials was beginning to enable children to learn about risk through exploration. During the inspection we saw that children were taking pride in developing their independence skills, attempting to put on their outdoor clothing and taking turns to help staff with snack by chopping up the fruit.

Children told us:

"I am splashing in a puddle."

"The water comes up to my knees."

"We are making gingerbread men."

"I am in a car."

"I am building a big tower."

Children experienced sensitive and responsive care, kind words, encouragement and praise which helped them to settle well and build their confidence. Whilst all staff were very new to the service they were qualified, experienced, enthusiastic and motivated, and provided a nurturing environment for the children. They were

getting to know the children and families well with a view to developing partnership working. Parents told us that they had found the staff to be friendly and welcoming. Systems had been established to help ensure that children were supported through early intervention as in the GIRFEC approach. The head teacher confirmed that such systems would continue to be monitored so that a holistic approach to the wellbeing of the child was maintained.

A child protection policy was in place; the staff had sound knowledge of child protection procedures through annual awareness training, to help safeguard children.

The head teacher maintained links with the nursery and was supporting the new staff team so that they were led and worked effectively together. Staff told us that whilst it was still very early days they considered that a shared vision for the service was being established, they felt valued and able to use their initiative. A couple of suggestions from parents had been promptly responded to by the service. Priorities for improvement included health and wellbeing through a whole school nurture approach and improved relationships and communication with parents.

What the service could do better

Children clearly had great fun outdoors. Staff planned to continue to replenish natural resources and scrap materials and introduce nature based sessions extending opportunities for exploratory and curious play. Free flow play between the indoors and outdoors with use of the adjacent courtyard area was to be introduced more readily once a gate had been placed at the end of the of the nursery corridor.

At the time of the inspection the newly appointed staff team was in the process of making changes to the organisation of the play room so that it was more thoughtfully arranged, to give children choices and the freedom to select equipment and materials. For example a quiet space/book corner, had been created. We would encourage staff to include the children in the evaluation of the environment responding to children's interests in a flexible way as they test out possibilities. For example, during the inspection children had restricted space to use the giant building blocks as a consequence it got in the way of children playing with other activities and was quickly abandoned.

The head teacher should ensure that the development needs of the staff are identified through formal discussion and training that is planned, shared and evaluated with a view to improving the service and enhancing outcomes for the children.

The head teacher recognised that there was scope for wider and formal systems of evaluation to be established that involved staff, parents and children. A clear focus for the service was the promotion of parental involvement and child-led planning. We also acknowledged that the format and intention of the child's learning journal had been changed with a view to children having greater ownership of them along with their parents. It was anticipated that as things progressed within the service, self-evaluation would be continuous with the views of all participants acknowledged leading to a better reflection of what needed to improve. A clear minute and action plan from staff meetings/discussion and a calendar/planner to monitor the cycle of evaluation may also be beneficial for such purposes. **See recommendation 1.**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The head teacher and staff should establish robust, reflective and effective systems of monitoring and evaluation, that involve children, parents/carers and staff with a view to sustained improvement.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Standard 13: Improving the Service, and Standard 14: Well-managed Service

Complaints

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

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
11 Feb 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 – Very good
		Environment	4 – Good
		Staffing	5 – Very good
		Management and leadership	4 – Good
20 Mar 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	5 – Very good
		Environment	5 – Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
30 Jun 2009	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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