

Mortlach Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

York Street
Dufftown
Keith
AB55 4AU

Telephone: 01340 820268

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

24 January 2019

Service provided by:

The Moray Council

Service provider number:

SP2003001892

Service no:

CS2003016012

About the service

Mortlach Primary School Nursery is provided by The Moray Council. The nursery class is accommodated within Mortlach Primary School in the Centre of Dufftown; a rural town in Moray. This service has been registered since 2003.

Mortlach Primary School Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 15 children aged over 3 years of age. Currently the nursery was only operating morning sessions, Monday to Friday during school term times.

The aims of the nursery were:

- To provide a secure environment in which young people feel confident to try out new experiences and are not put off by failure.
- To treat children, parents and staff equally with respect and in a fair and just manner without discrimination.
- To develop the key aspects of the children's development and learning through the 8 areas of Curriculum for Excellence: Health and Wellbeing, Literacy, Numeracy, Religious and Moral education, Expressive arts, Social studies, science and technology.
- To encourage independence within the nursery, when taking part in visits and in the playground, yet learning to share and interact with others positively with others.
- To work together with other agencies towards providing a happy and well informed beginning while considering the best interests of the whole child.
- To liaise closely with playgroups, primary one and the wider community to provide a smooth transition for the children between the different stages of their early years.

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 services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it right for every child: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible; and included.

What people told us

We received two completed Care Standards Questionnaires from parents who use the service. Both strongly agreed that overall they were happy with the quality of care and support their child received in the service.

During the inspection there were nine children present during the morning session aged between 3 and 5 years. We observed the children and saw that they were happy and confident in the nursery. They talked to us as they played, commenting:

- 'I am making a bird.'
- 'I like going to 'Megs Wood. We just walk around it; that's it.'
- 'I like dancing.'
- 'The first thing I do normally is drawing pictures'

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at progress with the services own improvement plan and quality assurance processes to monitor the quality of the provision within the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

The quality of care and support provided for children at Mortlach School Nursery was adequate.

The children in the nursery experienced care and support where children and families were respected and valued. New routines meant that parents were welcomed into the nursery at the beginning and end of the session to share in children's learning experiences. As a result, positive relationships and communication were evident between the parents and staff, contributing to continuity of children's care and support.

Children's induction into the nursery and transition from nursery to school ensured children were nurtured and secure. Staff knew children's personal care needs, bi-lingual abilities and medical needs well and had noted these for day to day reference; however there were no formal plans in place. Personal plans should provide robust detail on how issues affect children, how these are to be managed or supported, consultation and joint working with parents, and when or where to seek further help. **See recommendation 1.**

At the previous inspection a recommendation had been made to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the nursery; this was a continuing work in progress. Children were now being supported to learn and develop through planned play activities that had clearer learning intentions. We discussed with staff ensuring that learning was child led rather than topic led. **See recommendation 2.**

Children's learning profiles showed purposeful next steps; differentiated for those children working at different levels. Observations showed that children were having fun participating in a range of experiences. Observations did not, however, always capture progress and achievement relevant to children's identified learning needs. Assessing and tracking children's progress was an identified area for development on the nursery action plan and was a work in progress.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted through healthy snack options, daily physical activity and play in the fresh air. Children chose freely when they wanted to go outside. Children were supported to make healthy food choices in planning snack menus. Snack routines were unhurried and relaxed. They enabled children to make independent choices and to develop self-help skills. Overall the small snack groups provided children with a pleasant sociable experience and contributed to building friendships. A couple of children needed more

support to learn the expectations of how we behave towards each other and to respect these. **See recommendation 1.**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The manager and staff, in partnership with parents, should ensure that all children with an identified need have in place a detailed personal plan that sets out how children's health, learning or development will be supported. This should be reviewed and evaluated at a minimum of 6 monthly intervals.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15)

and in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Service) Regulations 2011, Regulation 5 Personal Plans.

2. The head teacher and staff should improve the quality of learning and teaching in the nursery, to provide children with more opportunities for independent learning and achievement, creativity, investigation and to engage with literacy and numeracy through play.

This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which states that, 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.' (HSCS 1.31)) and 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education.' (HSCS 1.27).

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The quality of environment provided for children at Mortlach Primary School Nursery was adequate.

Improvements had been made to make the nursery a more tranquil environment for the children. Wall displays were less busy and overwhelming. Displays were more focussed on children's own work. Staff described further planned improvements, which will continue to improve this.

Staff described trialling different layouts to the play areas and evaluating their success. There were clear rationales for some strategies. For example, limiting block play at present and overall, staff knew what they were trying to achieve.

The creative area was successfully set up to provide access to a variety of materials that engaged children's concentration in expressing their own ideas, through mark-making and creativity in different ways. The dressing up attracted children's interest, but this was not sustained, because the surrounding area was not set up to provide a flow, or context to the children's play. Children took the role play to a castle-tent in the book corner. This became too boisterous and meant children could not spend time quietly looking at books. Sand, water play and painting did not attract children's interest and needed more stimulating contexts. Small world play chosen by staff and set out on tables similarly did not attract interest. Staff recognised that the overall layout of the room needed continued improvement. Children would benefit from more opportunities for self-choosing activities. **See recommendation 1.**

Weekly outdoor learning sessions enabled children access to a woodland environment, where they could explore and investigate nature. In the nursery children benefitted from daily free-flow indoor/outdoor play; giving them opportunities for fresh air and energetic play outdoors. Increased natural and open-ended materials stimulated the children's interest. They engaged well in role play with real life resources in the 'mud kitchen'. One child experimented with rolling various loose parts down a slope. We talked to staff about finding out more about schemas; patterns in children's play that show what they are interested in learning about. Staff recognised that learning opportunities needed to be improved outdoors and described some ideas they planned to develop. **See recommendation 1.**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The manager and staff should develop the environment and resources to provide children with more challenging learning through play, more opportunities for choice and responsibility.

This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which states , 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.' (HSCS 1.31).

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The quality of staffing supporting children at Mortlach Primary school Nursery was good.

Children's experiences had begun to improve due to the recruitment of a new lead practitioner, who was qualified in childcare and education, bringing experience and fresh ideas to the post. Positive relationships had been established with the existing support worker, which meant children were experiencing a warm, relaxed atmosphere and consistent approaches.

Commendably, the support worker employed had also achieved a qualification in childcare and education at practitioner level and expanded her knowledge and skills. The staff team were now working well in partnership with the head teacher and local authority. Visits to other centres had resulted in staff feeling enthused with new ideas. Staff were able to reflect on their own practice, best practice and national guidance and had identified areas where changes would benefit the children. Together they had a shared understanding of the strengths of the service and where the service could be further developed.

Significant improvements had been made to the nursery routines to enable more time to talk to parents and share information on children's learning and wellbeing. As a result, we saw that parents were now confident in coming in to the nursery and had established friendly working relationships with staff.

Staff interaction with children was good. Children were listened to and responded to. Children were able to follow their interests because staff provided resources they spontaneously asked for. Intervention calmed boisterous play and helped children to negotiate and learn rules. Children were being helped to learn about factors which support their wellbeing. For example, keeping themselves safe.

A relevant staff training plan was being progressed. Staff would also benefit from training on self-evaluation using How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The quality of management and leadership at Mortlach Primary School Nursery was good.

The head teacher managed the nursery well and provided effective leadership for the staff. They met regularly together to update policies and procedures and to progress a clear action plan. The action plan was detailed, clearly focussed on improving learning and teaching and contained clear success criteria. The manager and staff had audited progress to date and highlighted next steps to take forward. As a result children's experiences were steadily improving.

The head teacher had worked with staff to create an ethos and culture of partnership with parents and inclusion. Positive working relationships had been established with families and the head teacher knew children well as individuals. Strong links had been made with other agencies to ensure equity and to ensure individuals had any support they needed. Parents were provided with good information about the curriculum, opportunities to participate in stay and play sessions and to discuss their child's learning and development. Parents contributed

children's achievements from home to their learning story. The head teacher planned to involve parents in self-evaluation later in the school year.

The head teacher had supported staff in their continuing professional development; enabling visits to other settings and access to training. Local guidance had been shared and implementation planned. A clear and relevant training plan was being progressed. The head teacher had monitored staff practice with a focus on children's literacy development and provided useful feedback.

The manager and staff were not yet using How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare as a format for evaluation. We suggested developing an improvement plan based on these up to date quality indicators, which will give staff a clearer framework to evaluate the impact on children and their progress in learning in more depth.

A previous recommendation on developing and implementing robust systems for monitoring and evaluation was a work in progress and is carried forward in this report. **See recommendation 1**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. In order to improve outcomes for children the head teacher and staff should develop and implement robust systems for monitoring and evaluating children's experiences and the quality of teaching and learning and use this to develop the service.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19) and 'I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership.' (HSCS 4.7)

Grade: 4 – 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

The head teacher and staff should improve the quality of learning and teaching in the nursery to provide children with more opportunities for independent learning and achievement, creativity, investigation, and to engage with literacy and numeracy through play.

This recommendation was made on 19 May 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Effective leadership from the new, acting, head teacher and the continued support of the local authority was continuing to drive gradual improvement. The staff recognised that this was a work in progress that needed to continue to be developed.

The recommendation was not fully met and is carried forward in this report.

Recommendation 2

Staff should develop more ways to involve and engage children in making choices and evaluating their experiences and use these to provide contexts for learning and teaching.

This recommendation was made on 19 May 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Staff involved children in making choices when resourcing areas and developing snack menus. Floor books and children's profiles were beginning to involve children more. Overall, more evaluation techniques could be developed with children.

The recommendation is not yet fully met and is carried forward in this report.

Recommendation 3

The provider, head teacher, and staff should develop a staff training plan and support staff to access the training they need to build their knowledge, skills, and confidence and improve outcomes for children.

This recommendation was made on 19 May 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

A new member of staff had been employed with appropriate qualifications and experience. The support worker had achieved a qualification. Staff were knowledgeable about best practice guidance. A training plan was being progressed. The recommendation was met.

Recommendation 4

In order to improve outcomes for children, the head teacher and staff should develop and implement robust systems for monitoring and evaluating children's experiences and the quality of teaching and learning and use this to develop the service.

This recommendation was made on 19 May 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The effective leadership of the new, acting, head teacher had continued to support the nursery in moving forward with changes and improvements, contributing to gradual improvements to children's experiences and outcomes. Implementing formal monitoring and evaluation was a work in progress.

Recommendation 5

The head teacher and staff should make better use of the outdoor environment to provide children with improved opportunities for fresh air, meaningful physical activity, and resources to support learning through play.

This recommendation was made on 19 May 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Children now had more regular opportunities to choose to play outdoors in the fresh air and to be physically active, benefitting their health and wellbeing. Staff were beginning to make the small outdoor play area more inviting. Children showed some interest in the newly developed 'mud kitchen' and used loose parts for experimentation. Children also had weekly visits to woodland to explore a natural environment.

The recommendation was met.

Recommendation 6

The manager and staff should ensure the environment provides a tranquil and inclusive environment where children can easily focus their attention on material displayed.

This recommendation was made on 1 March 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Action had been taken to improve the environment. There were now fewer posters and adult displays. This meant the environment was more tranquil. The recommendation was met.

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	
16 Nov 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
26 Oct 2016	Announced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak
17 Feb 2016	Announced	Care and support	2 - Weak
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak
29 Nov 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
20 May 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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