

Kirknewton Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 March 2020

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003017496

About the service

Kirknewton Primary School Nursery is a day care service for children provided by West Lothian Council. It is located within Kirknewton Primary School and comprises of one playroom, cloakroom and allocated outdoor play space. Kirknewton Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 32 children aged from three years to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time.

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection that was carried out by two inspectors on Thursday 5 and Monday 9 March 2020. Feedback was provided to the head teacher and early learning and childcare support manager on Tuesday 10 March 2020.

The service aims include:

'At Kirknewton Early Years Setting and Primary School positive relationships are at the heart of our school community, nurturing, learning, achievement and happiness.'

A full statement of the service aims is available to people who use the nursery.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure that they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving the outcomes 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 GIRFEC: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured active, respected, responsible and included.

What people told us

We observed children at play and found them to be happy and confident, enjoying their activities. Throughout the inspection the children happily engaged with us and invited us into their play.

We provided the service with 10 Care Standards Questionnaires for parents and carers of children using the service. Four completed questionnaires were returned to us before the inspection.

Those who completed our questionnaires strongly agreed or agreed that staff have the skills and experience to care for their child and support their learning and development. Were confident that the service keeps written information about their child securely and only share information where appropriate, and that their child can experience and choose from a balanced range of activities. One parent commented that there has been a huge change this year, this was their child's second year and they see a huge difference in their development and were looking forward to seeing how they help with the transition to primary 1.

Additional parent comments were the nursery would benefit from a larger outdoor area with better equipment for outdoor play. Snack options were great, but option of school dinner would be better than providing a cold packed lunch. The garden at the nursery is very small and restricts the amount of running around the children can do. It would be great to see the garden expanded somehow with more equipment for climbing space.

During the visit we spoke to the head teacher about the comments received, they told us of their plan to develop the outdoor play area and had recently fundraised in support of this. They spoke about the local authority plan to provide school meals for every child in August 2020. We found that lunch time experiences and outdoor learning could be further developed to improve children's social, creative and large physical development and have included this in our findings within care and support and the environment.

We had the opportunity to speak with other parents during our inspection. They confirmed that they were happy with the service provided.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at the improvement cycle, action plan and quality assurance systems in place and found that the senior leadership team and staff had a clear vision for how they would continue to support and care for the children and families using 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	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children benefited from the positive relationships they had formed with staff. Interactions were warm and caring and as a result, children were secure within the setting, this meant that children were able to independently explore their learning environment.

Relationships between staff and families were positive. Feedback returned within the Care Standards Questionnaires, told us that parents agreed, that overall, they were happy with the quality of care their child received and were happy about the recent improvements staff had made to their child's experiences. Staff encouraged parental involvement through initiatives like 'nursery natters' and by having parents into the playroom to contribute to children's learning, to enable children's experiences to be shared informally as well as formally, we asked that the senior leadership team, continued to support staff to feel confident when engaging with parent's daily, this will ensure that information is regularly exchanged, and that all staff have the skills to further build trusting relationships with parents, with potential wellbeing needs being identified and responded to early.

Children's wellbeing was being supported during their move from nursery to primary school. The school and nursery were working in partnership to ensure all children had a plan in place and there were shared practices between both settings. This was helping to provide consistency and ensured children's positive early learning experiences continued into school.

For example, nursery children had begun visiting primary 1 and to enhance children's play experiences, primary 6 'buddies' were invited into the nursery playroom. We could see that this was helping children to further develop their social and emotional skills with the older children being meaningfully engaged in the children's play.

Staff promoted positive behaviour and were good role models to children. We found that, almost all children, were kind during interactions and played in a developmentally appropriate way. Staff, almost always, demonstrated an understanding that children's emotional responses were a form of communication. The staff team should continue to develop agreed processes for when conflict or upset arise and ensure any agreed strategies are consistently applied, this will further support children to find solutions to their own problems, and the ability to develop strategies to cope with their overwhelming emotions. The senior leadership team should ensure everyone understands their responsibility in supporting children in their care and learning, particularly when unexpected events occur.

Almost all children were engaged in learning through self-directed play and accessed a range of natural and open-ended resources. For example, we observed children building cars from loose parts at a construction bench, designing butterflies and some making puddles outdoors. At times, some children were not maintaining their interest in the activities on offer and a few children moved from area to area without being involved in play. Staff did not always identify this and opportunities to help children become more purposefully engaged were missed. Staff should further develop play experiences, to extend children's learning, promote curiosity and enquiry and provide suitable challenge that will allow children to make progress in their learning.

We reviewed a sample of children's personal plans and found they had improved since the previous inspection. Personal plans were created in consultation with parent/carers, within 28 days from the child attending the service and set out how each child's needs would be met. To ensure the information held within a personal plan enables staff to best meet children's needs, we suggested the service now further develop systems that support staff to implement agreed strategies and to share significant information about children within the team, this will help to ensure children experience stability in their care and support from people who know their needs, choices and wishes.

Children had an online learning Journey. Staff observed children during their time within the setting and used their observations to plan future activities, recording these within the child's online learning journey. However, we found that observations were not yet being carried out in a systematic and consistent manner. The senior leadership team recognised the need to further develop staff observing, assessing and planning skills so that they better reflect children's individual needs. This area of improvement has been identified within the settings improvement plan.

Children had snacks that were prepared on the premises. Snacks were well presented, promoted children's independence and offered healthy choices, which supported children to eat well and to have a positive relationship with food. Overall, children enjoyed a relaxed and unhurried snack that encouraged them to try different foods. We asked staff to consider ways that they can improve children's lunch time experience so that it replicates the relaxed atmosphere created at snack time. For example, provide children with more space and choice, increase opportunities to be independent and support children's social learning.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

It was evident that improvements had been made since the last inspection. Potential hazards identified had been addressed and staff had improved their infection control practices. For example, hand washing and regular cleaning, which ensured children were kept healthy and minimised the risk of infections spreading. Staff empowered children to take control of their own hygiene, children were encouraged to regularly wash hands and liquid soap and hand towels were easily accessible. We discussed how this practice could be further encouraged outdoors.

The premises has a secure entry system in place, children and visitors were signed in and staff regularly communicated updates to one another about children. Systems were in place to encourage children to sign in and staff recorded attendance, which ensured that children were safe whilst at the setting. During the last inspection we asked for defined roles and responsibilities to be established, regarding staff management of the secure entry system. We found that this was still an area of practice that needed developed further to ensure consistency and the ongoing safety of children.

The resources on offer supported a good quality of play. The nursery was well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained equipment for the children to freely access. The cleanliness was good, and children were encouraged to participate in the cleaning up and tidying away of equipment and resources, which encouraged children to take responsibility for their playroom.

The layout of the environment supported children to be independent and make choices. For example, the setting has enough space for children to play alone, in pairs or small groups should they wish. Staff took advantage of other spaces in the school to facilitate small group activities. We asked the staff team to consider creating a calm space within the nursery, for children that needed time to self-regulate or wished a quieter environment, this would help to support children's emotional wellbeing.

Children were supported to extend their numeracy, language and communication skills. The environment encouraged children to talk with staff and friends, mark make, take part in storytelling experiences and explore patterns and sounds through play. For example, we observed children play with scrabble letters, which resulted in them testing sounds in their name. We saw children mark making, both indoors and outdoors using the range of resources provided.

Children were encouraged to be active and had free-flow access to an outdoor area. We asked staff to increase children's access to the larger natural playground surrounding the nursery garden, which would offer further opportunities to learn from and experience nature, whilst enhancing children's opportunity to take meaningful risks in their play. For example, create rope swings and climb trees, which would enhance children's physical development and help them build their own resilience.

Staff told us of their plans to develop the outdoor space further and had recently fundraised. Staff should continue to gain children and parent ideas and suggestions for future development of the service.

We recognise the benefits of children having free flow access to the outdoor learning environment, providing choice where they play and learn. However, the senior leadership team and staff should be mindful that the indoor environment temperature remains pleasant and at a suitable temperature to support children's health and wellbeing.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Through our discussions we found staff engaged well in professional dialogue with us, which highlighted that outcomes for children were important to them.

The newly appointed staff were being supported by a mentor through the induction process, using the National Induction resource, where they met weekly to discuss the progress of children's learning and individual care needs, in addition to improving own professional development. We found that this could be enhanced further, by using the reflective questions to identify areas for improvement and strengths, setting appropriate actions and goals.

We observed staff communicating and supporting one another in their work, this contributed to a pleasurable and welcoming environment that was built on respect, enabling children to feel comfortable and secure. Parent feedback told us, that they strongly agreed that their child appears happy and confident with staff, one parent commented that staff were excellent with children, they were always happy to see them, which makes it a very pleasant environment.

We found the recent staff changes were having a positive impact on the service. We saw that the existing and newly appointed staff were forming well as a team, they had created a supportive and inclusive service where everyone's voice was valued and respected. Staff recognised that they were on a learning journey and were committed to developing and improving the service, to further support staff, we identified the need for clear roles and responsibilities to be established based on the differing skills and expertise, this will further support staff when responding more effectively to children and parent needs. For example, the management of medication, and communication with parents and carers, particularly at the end and start of session.

During the visit we found that there were the right number of staff to care for children. There had been several changes to the staff team since the last inspection. The senior leadership team and staff had worked well to minimise the impact on children during this time.

We found that team building was not included in the service action plan. However, establishing a shared vision, values and aims with children, parents and staff were.

Regular meetings provided staff with opportunities to share their views, discuss children's individual needs, plan and facilitate learning opportunities and experiences for children, this was in addition to discussing the improvement priorities, having an awareness of practice guidance documents and relevant resource books, to further support their own practice and children's learning experiences.

Records showed that staff had registered with the relevant regulatory body the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) having the role of an early year's practitioner and support worker. Staff that we spoke to told us that they were aware of their responsibility for maintaining their own professional development, recording this on PRTL as well as adhering to the SSSC Code of Practice.

Staff were given personal development review booklets to record and reflect own personal capabilities. For example, self-reflection and challenges for practice. Coaching sessions between the head teacher and staff were to be rescheduled, due to recent staffing issues and time, when implemented, this should give staff and the senior leadership team the opportunity to focus on staff strengths and areas for improvement, in addition to highlighting further training that would be beneficial to them individually and children that attend.

We saw that specific training had been implemented to support all children's individual needs. For example, children's understanding of rhyme, speech and language development and gross motor skills. We found that the programmes in place were at the early stage of delivery, staff had begun to evaluate children's progress. However, we were unable to effectively measure the impact the programmes were having on children's learning and development at this stage.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The head teacher was the named manager of the service. The early learning and childcare support manager was responsible for the service in the absence of the head teacher. We found the head teacher to be passionate about a whole school approach for children and their families.

The early years officer has the responsibility for the day-to-day running of the nursery, their role was to support the early years practitioners and to ensure the smooth running of the playroom.

We found that the senior leadership team supported by the local authority worked well, to rectify recommendations made at the previous inspection. A self-evaluation cycle has been put in place, that focuses on the key priorities for development, this includes which staff will be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, using relevant guidance documents to support them in practice. For example, How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare, Education Scotland Benchmarks and the Care Inspectorate Health and Social Care Standards. This will further support the service to develop, measure and improve continuously as a team.

The service shared vision, values and aims were developed in partnership with staff, children and parents, which were based on improving outcomes for all, taking into consideration the needs of the community and early learning pedagogy.

During our inspection we observed some issues relating to the procedures for the safe administration of medication. For example, consents were not subject to regular review. We also found that staff were not consistently recording incidents and there was no system in place to audit accidents and incidents to inform next step planning. Audits should occur so that recorded information can be used to better plan children's support and/or improve the safety of the environment, as part of a robust quality assurance system. We discussed this with the staff team who agreed to action improvements to their current recording and monitoring systems.

We found almost all staff were aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe, they knew who their child protection officer was, and the protocol for sharing information in relation to safeguarding and child protection concerns. Staff had undertaken child protection training as a whole school approach. The head teacher told us that the newly recruited staff would have training once in post. To support all staff, we identified that further discussion led by the senior leadership team, would support staff further when identifying and recording health and wellbeing information more effectively.

We saw that effective systems by the senior leadership team were in place to audit chronologies and child protection records, this ensured that the assessment of children's wellbeing and safety needs were identified, and appropriate actions taken. The senior leadership team followed guidance and procedures to ensure any possible concerns were reported to the relevant authority. This meant that children were kept safe from harm. We spoke about the early years officer having advance training in child protection, to enable them to support practitioners daily, the head teacher spoke about ways in which they could be further involved.

We looked at the action plan for the service, that identified the proposed goals, steps, resources and delivery of the priorities for improvement, this included staff responsible and the time frame when this would be achieved. The shared leadership opportunities supported staff own professional development and the improved outcomes for children, this included the development of an area. For example, literacy, numeracy and the outdoor learning environment.

We saw evidence during the visit that staff had introduced resources to facilitate effective literacy and numeracy in the nursery and home. We saw that opportunities were planned for staff to visit other services, with a focus on outdoor learning, healthy eating, STEM and promoting creativity. Staff were encouraged to discuss each area developed by them with their colleagues and senior leadership team. Staff had begun to evaluate progress. However, we were unable to effectively measure the impact on children's learning and development at this stage.

We looked at the paperwork to support the quality assurance systems in place. For example, parent questionnaires and information boards within the nursery cloakroom. We saw that information was being shared digitally, which made certain that parents and carers were being updated continually with relevant information and upcoming events. Amongst the positive feedback returned, one parent commented that since the change in staff the nursery has really improved, the communication between staff and parents was excellent, staff take on any concerns and the nursery newsletters were a great idea too.

We concluded that the senior leadership team were aware of the importance of quality assurance systems. We were confident that they would use feedback from this inspection, and the ongoing feedback from children and parents to identify future priorities and measure the impact this was having on children's learning, development and care needs, which we will follow up at the next inspection.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

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

To promote children's wellbeing and development the service should, after consultation with parents/carers, ensure personal plans are fully completed for each child and that plans are reviewed and updated at least every six months thereafter, or when there is significant change or development.

The service should ensure that personal plans reflect children's needs and any strategies are recorded so that they can be effectively implemented and reviewed and support the service to keep their records in line with current legislative requirements.

This is to ensure 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)

This recommendation was made on 7 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Children had personal plans in place, which were updated on a regular basis when needs change and always within six months. Plans had relevant information from health agencies and the ASN development officer, within the local authority, which outlined that children's needs could benefit from being more outcome focused to better guide staff. Strategies for children were in place, however we did not see evidence of this in practice at times. An area for improvement, would be for keyworkers to share relevant information, including strategies with the staff team, this will ensure improved continuity and support for the child when staff changes occur.

This recommendation is: met.

Recommendation 2

The service should improve how children and young people are able to direct and lead their own play. In order to develop the play experiences provided for children the service should review the resources and experiences provided so that they stimulate children's natural curiosity, learning and creativity. The service should use best practice guidance to develop the staff team's understanding of play and how to promote positive play experiences for children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity." (HSCS 2.27)

To ensure children are fully supported to achieve their full potential staff should continue to develop the use of observations and assessments to identify and plan for children's learning and development.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which states that: "I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me." (HSCS 1.27)

This recommendation was made on 7 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Improvements had been made to the learning environment. Children were able to participate in a range of experiences, both indoors and outdoors. For example, construction at the work bench, block play, mark making, water play and transporting. An area for improvement would be for staff to extend and identify learning in the moment, which will further support children to be motivated, particularly children that have disengaged in their learning.

Staff were aware of guidance documents and relevant resource books, to further support their own practice and children's learning experiences.

This recommendation is: 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
7 Mar 2019	Unannounced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
3 Mar 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good
27 Nov 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
10 Sep 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
9 Feb 2009	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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