

# Lathallan Nursery Day Care of Children

Lathallan School  
Brotherton Castle  
Johnshaven  
Montrose  
DD10 0HN

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
12 March 2021

**Service provided by:**  
Lathallan Schools Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003564

**Service no:**  
CS2003016177

## About the service

We carried out an announced virtual inspection of Lathallan Nursery between 01 March 2021 and 12 March 2021. Feedback was given on 12 March 2021 to the senior management team.

Lathallan Nursery was registered in April 2002. It provides a day care of children service to a maximum of 74 children not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than 31 may be aged under two years. Lathallan Schools Limited provides the service.

The service operates from a designated adjoining building within the grounds of Lathallan School. The nursery has a dedicated entrance and garden play areas. The grounds provided access to local nature areas including woods, seaside and open outdoor play fields. Within the building children are cared for within four classrooms each with access onto outdoor decked area.

The aims of the service included:

- Ensure that the welfare of each individual child in our care is paramount and forms the basis of our practice.
- Encourage each child to be independent and develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and respect for others in the environment.
- Enable children to identify and communicate their own needs and feelings.
- Enable children to develop confidence, self-esteem and resilience.
- Continually reflect upon practice, as a setting and as individuals to ensure continual improvement of provision.
- Enable all children to develop their capabilities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.
- To help all children to prepare for the future.

This was a focused inspection to evaluate how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic.

## What people told us

We spoke with children using online technology. Children spoke to us about their experiences during mealtimes and outdoor play times. Using online technology we joined children outdoors using the grounds. Children showed how they played in various parts of the grounds including the Gruffalo woods, tree house and pavilion. Children were happy and familiar with their play space. They told us about their stick finding and measuring, book reading and finding flowers.

We asked for feedback from parents via email. All told us they were happy with the service provided and were aware of the changes that had been made to adhere to COVID-19 related guidance. Some parents told us that they would like more information on their child development. We spoke to the manager and senior team who agreed that this would be an area to now act upon.

Parents comments included:

"Lathallan have been absolutely fantastic regarding COVID-19, they have shared all relevant information and taken all appropriate precautions in my opinion, they email with all updates or phone if something needs to be dealt with immediately. The Facebook group that was set up to involve the children staying at home

includes activities for the kids to do, story time live from the manager and allows parents to post what their children have been doing at home. Arrival and departure times have been much stricter (understandably) to prevent mixing with others. Unless necessary, parents have not been allowed inside the building with collections and drop offs taking place outside where a hand wash area is provided for the children. I don't feel the staff could have improve on anything, they have done everything they can in my opinion."

"The staff has always kept parents informed and up-to-date with the procedures for COVID-19. Emails have been sent detailing the set up of class bubbles, hygiene and social distancing practice within and for the parents dropping off their children. A system of dropping off outside individual classes has been very effective in terms of social distancing and generally works better for space compared to previously waiting in the internal corridor. Just remember to bring an umbrella on the rainy days."

"The staff have been amazing at creating a virtual space for the parents to post about their children as a way of keeping in touch. Live Storytime from the manager was great also and such a positive way of keeping connections with the nursery."

"Staff communication around the changes as a result of COVID-19 has been excellent. They have made a number of positive changes, in particular though, we love that our son spends more time outdoors now as part of these changes. He comes home after every nursery day having learnt new things about the natural world. The setting for Lathallan is ideal for this and the staff have worked really hard to facilitate outdoor activities and learning."

"I would just like to acknowledge and give our appreciation to all the staff at Lathallan Nursery for how they have been so responsive and adaptive to the changes needed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as being in a position themselves where there is an element of risk of being exposed to COVID-19."

"Handwashing outside was a slight concern during winter as it meant more time for parents, children and staff outside waiting around in the cold."

"During COVID-19 information about my child seems to have slipped slightly from the regular, or even daily full updates, but this is understandable due to shorter handovers and the unnecessary transferring of paperwork back and forth. Giving the current situation the team appear to have adapted and coped well."

"We have received termly information regarding new measures or continuing protective measures for example, classroom bubbles, using external doors to classrooms, walkways, masks etc. We have been made to feel at ease, we have plenty of opportunities to ask questions. Children's activities are now mostly outdoors which is fantastic for all and the nursery were moving in that direction anyway so COVID-19 has helped this transition along nicely."

"The friendly personal nature of the nursery has continued throughout the year despite there being changes for us all. Handovers are still individual to each child and key information is imparted. The staff should be extremely proud of what they have achieved this year and the learning will go on in our children thanks to the excellent foundations they have laid this year under such unique circumstances."

"The kids have adapted so well to the changes and it hasn't affected their perception of nursery being a fun place to be. The younger staff change a lot but the older staff have been there for a long time and the experience shines through. All staff always seem to be highly trained and confident at what they are doing. The activities they plan always seem great fun, indoors and outdoors."

"Before the nursery opened they shared videos and emails of guidance for drop off and pick up. I feel the nursery have done an excellent job at communicating guidance and keeping everyone safe. The outdoors drop off works extremely well, washing hands at outdoor sinks prior to entry. They have ensured the children are safe and without comprising on providing fantastic care and experiences for them."

"I feel supported by the nursery and they listen to any requirements for my children. I get really good handover about their days and wellbeing, but it's not required as I can see myself the kids have had a great day and are well fed."

"There have been a number of "story times" over the Facebook group to engage us while being away from the nursery. Once back, we receive a daily breakdown of what they have been doing, as well as what they ate."

"There is a handwashing station where children and adults must wash their hands at drop-off and pick-up - I presume there are other handwashing opportunities for children throughout the day. Arrival and pick up is all outside and parents must wear face coverings, which everyone has been fine with."

"Staff communicate what has happened each day at pick up time which is nice, as you get some form of insight into what has been going on. If more photos/videos were available of the children doing these activities, there are a wide range of things that happen in the nursery and it would be lovely to see some more of what they get up to. Overall, I think Lathallan are doing a great job, I appreciate it is a hard situation for them during a pandemic but they aren't letting it affect them. Only thing would be to have more visuals of the activities they get up to."

"There is always a variety of activities on hand with a focus on being outside and exploring the grounds. Our daughter sometimes doesn't want to go outside and she is never forced, which I was initially worried about with COVID-19. We feel our daughter has a great relationship with the staff and the other children at the nursery."

"We get updates from the staff on collection, these are usually on what she has eaten, if she has slept, nappies and generally the activities the children have been involved with. We sometimes get further updates when prompted on generally how our daughter is doing but not in any great detail. We obviously appreciate the limitations COVID-19 has on things such as these. We are so keen to know how our daughter is getting on individually with her social skills and general development skills."

"We would like to say that overall we are very impressed with Lathallan and we know that our daughter is very happy and settled. It is very obvious that she has good relationships with the key staff and although there have been a lot of staff turn over this year we have felt that have been well managed and our daughter was not overly disrupted."

"During both lockdowns use of email and the private Facebook group have been really valuable in keeping in touch, not only from the nursery side but between parents/children, which has allowed children to remain connected with the nursery and their peers, which I feel then supported the transition back into nursery. Staff were also very encouraging of activities children engaged with at home which give my daughter a real boost of encouragement and confidence."

"Children have their own learning journal which we can access at any time, questionnaires completed when entering a new class to support staff to learn more about the child, staff easily available to provide feedback. The staff have all gone above and beyond during a very challenging year and we can't rate them

highly enough, both the support in nursery, via email and social media pages has been excellent in continuing to keep the Lathallan community thriving."

"There has been many positive changes implemented to adhere to social distancing. Parents were given the opportunity to express concerns or views about re-opening. I would like to be told about my child's progress and learning, handovers are kept short due to COVID-19. This is understandable, but could an online journal be reintroduced? I find all the staff really friendly and caring, my child has formed close bonds with the all the staff, they recognise his likes and dislikes and I feel they really know his personality. He is very happy to go to nursery and loves to tell me about the fun he has had."

"The communication was helpful but basic and for our two year old not necessarily useful as he was too young for online activities as such. They adapted quickly and tried to address any concerns raised by us. I still feel that some of the groups are quite large and therefore contact between children is high. But I feel nursery has done what they could considering the number of staff available and space."

"We had some lovely conversations on how to support our child when he returned to nursery as he had progressed many skills such as talking, eating etc., during lockdown and also started potty training."

"I would love more written feedback of my child's development and what he did that day but I am aware that is time-consuming. Even a picture of him doing something would be lovely. The board isn't always ready at early collection and handovers can be short to minimise contact and I feel like I am missing out on his day."

"The building allowed for each room to have their own drop off and pick up points which was easy to follow. The downside of this was often not being seen during the darker evenings and having to wait a while, sometimes in poor weather, for the staff to see me. There are doorbells but sometimes they weren't working. It would have been beneficial to ensure these doorbells were in good working order every day, or have staff checking for parents during the normal pick up times."

"I really don't have much update on my individual children's progress. I get a run down of their day and some specific bits to them, but I really never know how they are doing in regards to them as individuals. Perhaps this is due to the quick exchange during pick up, or the lack of privacy during these times. I really wish I was told how my child is doing in certain things."

"Lathallan is a lovely nursery and with the way things are now they are working amazingly to keep everyone safe, the kids have great outdoor time and my child loves going. All teachers are very approachable and great at keeping you up-to-date with your child and the goings on."

### 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 and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 5.1: Children's Health and Wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Children are nurtured and supported throughout their changed experience in their early learning and childcare setting.
- Effective communication with families enables responsive care to support children through changing circumstances.

Children and families were well supported in areas of health and wellbeing. Staff had a nurturing and adaptable approach to provide this support through changing circumstances. Staff used imaginative and fun ways to introduce changing routines and experiences to the children, involving them whenever possible. Child friendly posters and displays were used. Children helped make up songs and staff used stories to support children understand their changing experiences.

Staff had an understanding of child protection, they had gained a shared insight into the potential adversities that children and families may have experienced as a result of lockdown and any longer term effects of the pandemic. They were clear about the approaches they would follow to safeguard children.

Arrangement were made that allowed the manager to keep contact with families during the lockdown period, helping provide support and information. This level of support continued as children returned back to the nursery full-time. Staff identified areas of individual support to families and children and continue to work with them closely to access help and support from other agencies. Parents commented on how helpful, valuable, and caring staff have been. This has helped support children's safety and wellbeing.

Ongoing communication with families recognised the difficulties of social distancing. The use of a closed Facebook page, phone calls and online stories read by staff were some of the methods staff used to encourage fun learning activities and keep parents up-to-date during lockdowns. Information for return was provided to help parents understand the changes due to COVID-19. This enabled parents to prepare their children for the changes in routine when they returned to the service.

Parents told us that they would now like more information about their child's daily activities, social skills, and development. This would benefit children's achievements. We spoke to the management team and they agreed that this was an area of improvement; we discussed their plans on this moving forward.

Parents were asked to provide current information about children to make sure that children's needs were met to keep them safe, happy, and achieving. Sensitive settling in procedures were arranged with parents to support children on their return to the service. Where children required extra support to settle back, staff worked with families to support their return. This reassured parents and further supported children to feel confident and welcome.

Staff recognised the importance of outdoor play for children. The nursery had begun to shift their ethos to learning outdoors in all weathers. Most children played outdoors for the whole session. We spoke to the manager about some improvements to toileting facilities whilst outdoors and this was addressed the following day. We observed children having fun and showing us around areas of the grounds including the

Gruffalo woods and the Tree House. Being outdoors helps prevent infection but also promotes healthy wellbeing of children.

**Quality indicator 5.2: Infection Prevention and Control Practices support a Safe Environment for Children and Staff.**

**- Children are protected as staff take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection.**

Staff took the necessary precautions and a range of approaches to help reduce the spread of infection as set out in guidance. Prior to reopening, management had created a COVID-19 risk assessment. This was regularly updated and shared with staff and families and set clear guidance and expectations. Key policies had been adapted in line with COVID-19 practice. We discussed with the service the benefits of having a written policy directly for COVID 19 and they agreed to implement this.

Enhanced cleaning procedures were in place. Toys, equipment and difficult to clean items had been reduced so that a clean and safe environment could be easily maintained. The nursery was well staffed, which allowed for staff to carry out cleaning duties including touch points throughout the day. We spoke to the manager about some areas, such as soft furnishing and shoe storage, that could not be cleaned every day and gave examples of how this could be overcome. This was fixed as soon as possible and included a new storage area being built. These steps were supportive to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Safe arrival and departure times were in place outdoors. Signage for parents was clear and parents were aware of the guidance to follow. Outdoor sinks allowed for handwashing before entering each class. Some parents raised that some door bells that had been put in place did not always work and that having to wait outdoors in poor weather could be difficult. We raised this with the management team who agreed to look at this ongoing throughout the seasons.

The nursery was well ventilated when children were indoors. Staff were all aware of social distancing measures and worked together to maintain a safe distance from each other helping to keep children safe. Staff all carried on person packs that contained masks, hand gel and equipment that may be needed. This helped to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

Children had been supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing was always supervised by a member of staff. Staff had used fun ways of introducing this such as songs and rhymes. When using the school grounds warm water was available by using water butts that were easy to travel with. Staff worked with those children who required a little extra support encouraging a sense of achievement.

Staff were clear on the signs and symptoms relating to COVID-19 and that neither children or staff should attend the service if they displayed any of these. Staff were familiar with and implemented safe and appropriate procedures.

## Quality indicator 5.3: Staffing Arrangements are Responsive to the Changing Needs of Children during COVID-19.

- Staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and families.
- Staff are well supported and confident.

Staff were aware of guidance to be followed to maintain a safe environment and reduce the risk of spread of infection. Staff told us that they felt confident about the procedures and that risk assessments were easily accessible and could be referred to any time. The management team kept them well informed about any updates and changes.

Staff had attended training that supported their practice during the pandemic. This included infection control, emotional safety training and outdoor learning in nature training. Staff spoke about how this had been beneficial to how they support children. Regular socially distanced team meetings meant that learning and practice could easily be shared between class teams. This benefited how they supported children.

The service was appropriately staffed to meet the additional demands of COVID-19. Staff worked in groups which provided consistency for children helping them feel secure. Staff time was planned across the day to ensure that additional tasks could be carried out without compromising on the care and experiences for children.

Staff were clear about their roles and discussions with them indicated that, they were well motivated, and keen to share ideas and help each other. It was recognised that there had been some recent changes to the staff team and roles. They spoke about their roles with enthusiasm and shared how happy they were to be working as a team.

Staff were being well supported. They valued the support that was being given at both a professional and personal level. Staff felt able to share ideas and voice personal worries and felt supported by each other and the management team.

The staff team worked together well to evaluate new procedures and make changes when needed to ensure effective infection control practices and support for children. Staff had all been involved in self-evaluating their service and identifying areas for improvement. Staff were empowered to act on and make these changes when needed. They kept positive outcomes of children at the heart of any improvements.

The management team had identified that they now needed to formalise their auditing and monitoring of practice. We agreed that this would be beneficial and support the continued positive development quality experiences for children.



## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

In order to ensure children are supported in their wellbeing and learning needs the manager and staff should ensure that:

- Information within personal plans is used consistently by staff.
- Observations made are meaningful and identify children's learning.
- Suitable, challenging and appropriate possible next steps are identified.
- Experiences planned for enhance children's learning and potential.

**This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:**

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 16 January 2020.**

#### Action taken since then

Not Assessed

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The manager and staff should ensure that children benefit from routines that are child led, promote their independence and are balanced throughout the day.

**This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 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).

**This area for improvement was made on 16 January 2020.**

#### Action taken since then

Not Assessed

#### Previous area for improvement 3

The manager and staff should ensure that guidance is followed and all information is in place when managing children's medication needs.

**This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:**

'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and recourses' (HSCS 4.27).

Medication guidance can be found here: <http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/189567/childrens-service-medication-guidance.pdf>

**This area for improvement was made on 16 January 2020.**

#### Action taken since then

Long-term medication was well managed. Staff were aware of and following guidance.

Met

#### Previous area for improvement 4

In order to promote children's learning and development, equipment and opportunities for children should be extended to facilitate rich daily outdoor play experiences for all children that promote learning and development.

**This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:**

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me.' (HSCS 1.27); 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

**This area for improvement was made on 16 January 2020.**

#### Action taken since then

Not Assessed

#### Previous area for improvement 5

Staff should use national guidance to reflect on their current levels of practice and develop more effective ways to support children in the following ways:

- How to observe, assess and plan for children's learning.
- Lead their own learning.
- Develop skills in language, curiosity and thinking.

**This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:**

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

Supporting guidance can be found here:  
<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/>  
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement>

**This area for improvement was made on 16 January 2020.**

**Action taken since then**

Not Assessed

**Previous area for improvement 6**

The provider and manager should ensure that quality assurance and monitoring of staff practice is robust enough to have a positive impact on the experiences of children.

**This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:**

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

**This area for improvement was made on 16 January 2020.**

**Action taken since then**

Not Assessed

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	5 - Very Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	5 - Very Good
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	5 - Very Good

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