

Howden St. Andrews Primary School Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

Kingsport Avenue
Howden
Livingston
EH54 6BA

Telephone: 01506 433 114

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 May 2021

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003017494

About the service

Howden St Andrews Primary School Nursery was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 01 April 2011 to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children aged 3 years to entry into primary school.

The service is provided by West Lothian Council and offers funded childcare to eligible children. It is located within the Howden area of Livingston and operates from one playroom, with a large cloakroom area within the primary school. Nursery children have access to a separate enclosed garden.

The service had recently reviewed their aims and values in partnership with children, parents, and staff. They developed a 'Build Up' culture where everyone supports each other to build up resilience.

The aims of the service are:

- Creativity
- Independence
- Play

The values of the service are:

- Happy
- Kind
- Safe

We carried out an unannounced onsite inspection of the service on Wednesday 26 May 2021. We continued the inspection virtually using Teams technology and telephone discussions. We concluded the inspection by giving feedback on Friday 28 May via Teams technology.

This was a focussed 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. This inspection was carried out by an inspector from the Care Inspectorate. Our methodology for the inspection included:

- Observations of children's routines and staff interactions with children.
- Observations of infection prevention and control practice.
- Telephone discussions and email exchanges with the manager.
- Telephone conversations or emails with four parents.
- Virtual discussions with staff.
- Reviewing key records, policies, and written procedures relative to Covid-19.

What people told us

Four parents contacted the Care Inspectorate via email and telephone to give their views of how the nursery had delivered care to them and their children during the pandemic. All of them were extremely happy with the care provided, particularly the care and attention given to ongoing communication throughout the pandemic as well as the care and learning support given during lockdown periods. Parents told us that the nursery was fantastic, and they could not fault them.

We observed children to be happy and settled in the service with lots of opportunities for child-led play being available throughout the sessions. Children knew about Covid-19 and confidently told us what they did to help to keep the germs away.

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

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| 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 Covid-19.

Children thrived in the high-quality service due to the teams enabling attitude and commitment to support them through changing times. Staff told us that they were open and honest with children about why changes were needed. They focused on keeping them busy and followed their interests. We saw happy children who appeared to be safe and secure.

A 'Build Up' culture ensured the strong focus on building children's emotional wellbeing and resilience. As a result, we saw confident, and resilient children who clearly felt a sense of belonging. Staff practised mindfulness and used this approach to help children, families and themselves to increase ability to regulate emotions and decrease anxiety.

There was a strong focus on continuing excellent connections with families during the pandemic. A wide range of technology was used to create and share interactive presentations which resulted in parents being fully informed and included.

Family engagement, through the use of technology, was exceptional, particularly during lockdown periods. The service empowered and enabled families to remain involved in the life of the service. Care and support offered was targeted and right for children and parents during the pandemic. Staff had a noticeably clear understanding of their role in keeping children safe. Regular contact with families who were not using the service meant that staff knew if they were coping during this difficult time and offered support. Staff continued to have very high expectations for children during lockdown periods. They created home learning links, which enabled children to continue to progress in their learning and remain connected to nursery. Learning trackers were used as a baseline to plan the level of support. This ensured that care and support offered was targeted and right for the children and their families.

Staff made borrow bags to go home to families. Children learned through play, with their parents support, and remained connected to nursery. The bags were made up with resources to support children's individual needs and interests. For example, borrow bags for older children focussed on literacy and number skills.

Staff ensured that children received high quality transition experiences, despite Covid-19 restrictions. Support packages meant that children settled back into nursery quickly. The service introduced 'Bothered Bear' who joined the nursery. He needed looked after, kept safe and loved. He was used as a prop for children to learn about nursery values and to provide comfort when required. Similarly, the high-quality transition package onto primary one supported emotional wellbeing and continued progress.

Quality Indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.

During Covid-19, the application of strict infection control procedures is important to keep people safe. We found the service was operating to a very good level in this area of practice.

To ensure that areas were clean and well-maintained procedures were in place for thorough cleaning of the indoor environment and outdoor resources. Staff effectively carried out additional tasks, without disturbing children's play, and we could see that environments were clean and well maintained.

Children were very familiar with the routines in nursery. Handwashing was carried out at key points of the day. We reminded staff that consistent observation of children's handwashing would ensure that this was effective. Children could tell us "You need to cough into your elbow to keep your hands clean of germs." This helped to keep children safe and healthy.

The service had comprehensive Covid-19 risk assessments, based on national guidance which were effective in staff practice. The manager asked us to complete a track and trace sheet at the end of the onsite part of the inspection to identify who we had been in close contact with.

The risk of spreading Covid-19 was minimised because a lot of time was spent outside. Children could independently access the outdoor area and staff understood the benefits of outdoor play. Similarly, there were weekly visits to nearby Howden Park to engage with health giving benefits of nature. Outdoor areas were well laid out and a particularly good start had been made to using natural open-ended materials to develop children's creativity.

Staff maintained a safe physical distance from each other, and this was second nature to them. The procedures for parents dropping off or collecting children had been well organised to ensure that physical distancing could be maintained. Staff still understood that there were times when parents may need to speak to staff, and procedures had been developed to enable this safely.

To protect staff and children from the risk of Covid-19, personal protective equipment (PPE) was readily available and used appropriately, for example, when changing children. Staff wore face coverings when in shared spaces and when taking children out into the community. Staff confidently told us about the correct procedures for putting on and taking off PPE safely. We reminded staff not to touch and adjust masks when wearing them.

Quality Indicator 5.3: Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during Covid-19.

The values and aims of the service were embedded in staff practice. Very strong values across the staff team provided warm, caring, and nurturing approaches that ensured children's personal development and care needs continued to be met during the pandemic.

The management team had a clear vision and respectful ways of working which promoted outstanding outcomes and benefits for children, staff and parents. Staff were well supported to recognise the potential impact of Covid-19 within work and their personal circumstances. Staff felt connected, committed to their work, and demonstrated a positive ethos which promoted a happy and secure environment for children.

The service invested in a mindfulness training and consultancy agency, who provided general training for staff and direct consultancy about children's needs, on an unnamed basis. This supported staff to ensure better outcomes for children. Similarly, the trauma informed staff recognised and responded to individual needs. The family engagement tracker was one example of how they monitored contact with families to respond when support was required during lockdown.

Very high expectations of staff resulted in a professional team who embraced a culture of development and leadership. Staff strengths were recognised and led to leadership responsibilities, which they embraced. The staff member who led on learning through technology, told us about parent led home learning and a higher uptake of parents contributing to the online learning journals.

Similarly, empowerment groups for all staff across the school community resulted in shared leadership and collective responsibility. This enabled staff to excel in their goals and aspirations for children.

Management made best use of lockdown periods to upskill staff in Covid-19 and wider topics. Exceptional staff commitment during lockdown meant that time was used effectively to engage in training and work on leadership projects. The service seized every opportunity during this time to aid improvement. Various improvement toolkits were developed and used to support best outcomes for children, examples included the 'lockdown' and 'return to nursery' toolkit. Data measurement tools were used to measure the impact on outcomes for children.

Detailed evaluations

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| 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 | 6 - Excellent |
| 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 | 6 - Excellent |

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