

# Durness Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Durness Primary School  
Durine  
Durness  
Lairg  
IV27 4PN

Telephone: 01971 511 237

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
7 March 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Highland Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001693

**Service no:**  
CS2019377766

## About the service

Durness Primary School Nursery is located within the primary school building. The nursery has access to a large playroom with kitchen facilities and a smaller playroom/storage room. The children have lunch in the main school canteen along with the primary aged children. The playroom opens directly onto a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The children also have access to the bigger main school playground. Both areas offered good space and had a very good range of open ended and natural resources. The children receive visits from the local ranger and enjoy going out into the local community and learning about the animals, insects, plants and sea creatures and how they can help to protect them.

The service has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since August 2020 and can provide a service to a maximum of 10 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time;

## What people told us

The three children present during the session were observed as being very happy and relaxed in the care of the staff. There was a very good rapport between the children and staff which allowed for natural and open communication. The children were all engaged in a range of activities throughout the session, both on their own or as a group. They all enjoyed the range of activities available outdoors and the freedom to run around the large school playground. The children were eager to show us their outdoor play area and enthusiastically told us about all the fun they had at nursery.

The parents who offered feedback were happy with the nursery and the quality of the care and support offered to their children. Parents felt that the staff knew the needs of the individual children and supported them appropriately. Communication and information sharing was seen as good and staff were described as being friendly and helpful. Parents did highlight their disappointment that on at least one occasion the service closed due to their being no supply staff available while permanent staff were off sick.

## Self assessment

We did not request a self-assessment from the service as part of this inspection. We assessed the service's improvement plan and quality assurance processes as part of our evidence gathering.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

## Quality of care and support

## Findings from the inspection

The quality of care and support has been evaluated as very good. We found that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

The children were all very happy, settled and relaxed during their time in the nursery. They experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff who supported their care needs. Staff offered comfort and cuddles when needed, which gave the children reassurance. This supported children to feel safe and secure during their time at the service.

We observed the children having lots of fun both indoors and in the outdoor play areas. We saw that children were very engaged in their play in a purposeful and meaningful way. Children were encouraged to follow their interests and curiosities and lead their play experiences.

Staff were all aware of the individual care needs of the children attending. Each of the children had a personal plan in place. These contained the essential information to ensure staff met the individual needs of the children attending and ensured there was consistency and continuity in care routines. There was evidence that parents were fully included in the regular review of their child's personal plan. The staff worked in partnership with other professionals to ensure that they met any specific care needs.

The children experienced positive and relaxed meal and snack times. The children were able to have lunch at a pace which was right for them. As a very small nursery and primary school, all the children were able to sit together for lunch. These were very social events where the staff also sat with the children and chatted with them. The children received appropriate levels of support and independence skills were promoted. The manager and staff had made use of best practice guidance, 'Setting the Table' to ensure the meals and snacks they provided were healthy and nutritious. We discussed with how they might extend the opportunities for developing independence skills at mealtimes.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection, prevention and control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and families. For example, good handwashing routines were in place and had been adapted in line with current guidance. The playrooms were visibly clean and tidy with enhanced cleaning regimes in place to prevent the spread of infection.

Staff had a clear understanding of their role and responsibility relating to keeping children safe and protected. The staff had previously completed child protection training. This helped reduce the potential risk of harm to children, as staff had the knowledge and confidence to respond to any concern.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

## Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme to be very good. We found that there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

The nursery was well maintained, clean, bright and very welcoming. The manager and staff continued to develop the playrooms to create a calming, cosy and neutral environment. Both the indoor and outdoor environments offered a very good range of learning experiences. Good use was being made of natural, open ended resources both indoors and outdoors. Children were able to direct their own play and activities in a way that they chose.

Children attending the service were kept safe through the various systems the manager and staff had in place. Staff explained that they completed daily visual checks before the children arrived as well as at the end of the day. We sampled the risk assessments the service had in place and found that the manager and staff were very vigilant in their care of the children.

Children benefitted from access to a well-resourced and carefully set out indoor play space. We saw children who explored happily and were engaged in their play. Consideration had been given to the variety of activities and experiences on offer to stimulate the children's curiosity and imagination. Resources were well matched to the developmental stages of the children and promoted their learning. Children were able to independently select resources of their choice and lead their own play. Resources provided supported developing skills and enhanced children's opportunities to progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Staff routinely reviewed children's use of resources and areas to make sure that children were engaged and challenged.

The outdoor space provided children with a wide range of opportunities to stimulate their imagination, encourage children to take turns, share and problem solve. The main playroom opened directly onto their own outdoor space and allowed for free flow. The outdoor play areas were well organised, maintained and children had access to a variety of engaging, creative resources for example, a mud kitchen, digging area, loose parts resources, water play, numeracy and literacy resources and mark making. The children also had almost daily access to the large main school playground where there more loose parts, a small wooded area and a poly tunnel where the children could take part in planting activities. The children were eager for us to see all the activities they could take part in outdoors. They enjoyed telling us about their various adventures and what they had learnt. As they played with the water and watering can, they explained how they had to water the plants as they needed water to grow.

Once a week the nursery children joined the primary school age children and went out with the local ranger. This was a very popular activity where the children learnt about their local environment, the plants and animals which lived there and what they could do to protect the natural environment. The children told us about a recent outing when they set up a nature camera and what animals they were hoping to photograph.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

The quality of staffing has been evaluated as good. We found that there were a number of important strengths which outweigh the areas for improvement. These strengths have a significant positive impact on children's experiences and support positive outcomes.

Recruitment procedures for the service were effective and reflected best practice. Arrangements were in place to ensure all staff had the necessary skills, experience, qualifications and values to provide good quality childcare and education. All staff had the required pre-employment checks and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). We spoke with the newest member of staff who confirmed that they had received induction training when they first started.

There were two full time early years practitioners. They had both only been working at the nursery for approximately two months. There was also a part time worker. They presented as being very enthusiastic and committed to providing a positive experience for the children in their care. The staff worked well together as a team and there was a shared, positive ethos. Staff had a good rapport which allowed for open and natural communication. We observed staff being very warm and nurturing towards children who were given hugs and comfort when needed. This enabled children to feel valued and cared for. Children enjoyed spending time with staff and were comfortable in their company.

Staff recognised the importance of developing strong and secure attachments with children and how skilled interactions supported children's play and learning. They were aware of the children's individual developmental needs and were able to respond appropriately. Staff made use of effective questioning to extend children's thinking and problem solving skills. They understood how children's play could be extended when using open ended materials.

Staff were proactive in relation to their training and keeping up to date with good practice guidance. They reflected on how what they had learnt impacted on their practice and the outcomes for children. Staff explained that the manager supported and encouraged them to complete training. The manager stated that she would be having support and supervision meetings with staff where their strengths and training needs would be discussed.

At present, the manager tended to speak with the staff informally during her regular visits to the service. She also made use of online communication to maintain contact and share information. The manager explained that she had set up a timetable of regular formal staff meetings. Such meetings would offer the opportunity for the staff and the manager to be fully involved in the ongoing self-evaluation of the service as well as the development and review of the improvement plan. Regular staff meetings would also allow for the sharing of best practice, information and ideas.

### Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality indicator as adequate. We identified some strengths which just outweighed the weaknesses which impacted on children's outcomes.

The manager and staff fully engaged in the inspection process and appreciated the guidance and the signposting to various websites and best practice offered by the inspector. The manager and the staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure positive outcomes for children.

As a result of the staff team only being in post for approximately two months, only limited informal monitoring of staff practice had been completed by the manager. Effective support and supervision arrangements were yet to be put in place. The current informal arrangements did not ensure that individual staff were supported to identify their strengths and learning needs. The manager acknowledged the need to establish a formal system to monitor staff practice and to provide effective support and supervision for each individual staff member. This would result in staff being offered the appropriate development opportunities to positively impact on the quality of the play experiences for children.

There was a plan in place for regular team meetings to take place. The manager recognised the value of staff regularly coming together and advised that setting up team meetings was a priority. Regular team meetings would provide time for the manager and all staff to reflect on their practice, identifying what they do well for children in their care and highlight areas for development across the service.

There was an improvement plan in place which identified the priority action points the manager and staff would be working on. However, there was only limited evidence that all relevant stakeholders were involved in the process of identifying the priorities. The manager should actively seek the views of the children and their families to allow them to feel included and to show that their feedback was valued. There were also limited evidence of staff's involvement in identifying the priority areas and the ongoing review of the improvement plan. The manager stated that the introduction of regular meetings with staff would ensure that they were involved and included in the ongoing development of the service.

Within the nursery, there were opportunities for the children to provide feedback and suggestions as to how the service could be developed. The children were encouraged to be involved in decisions relating to the day to day running of the service. This supported children to feel included and respected. While we were there, the children were very active in choosing activities and leading their play and learning, with appropriate support and encouragement from staff.

We found more opportunities were needed for the service to gather the views of the children's families. We asked the manger to develop further systems to engage parents more in evaluating the service and use the information gathered to inform future improvements. This would help support parents to feel included and influence change.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 3 - adequate

**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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.



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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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