

Donibristle Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Morlich Road
Dalgety Bay
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 November 2022

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Donibristle Primary School Nursery is located in a quiet residential area of Dalgety Bay in Fife. There are local amenities such as shops, a library and other community services nearby. The school is surrounded by green spaces and is also close to various transport links.

Children have access to a designated playroom and a small sensory room. There is also direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Toilets and a small kitchen space are available in the playroom and a nappy changing room is close by. There is a communal space available in the school and a cloakroom area with an adjoining parent meeting space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 8 November 2022 between 08:20 and 18:45. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with 32 children using the service and spoke with 13 of their family members
- spoke with eight staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals, such as local authority representatives.

Key messages

- Children were encouraged to be independent and make choices about their own play.
- Most families were happy with the experience they had and some suggested areas that could be better including more regular communication.
- Children had access to good quality facilities indoors and outdoors, including opportunities to explore the local community.
- Leadership were committed and dedicated to making necessary improvements and we were confident they had the capacity to lead the team through change.
- Staff were motivated and keen to learn so that children were effectively supported to achieve their full potential.
- Nurturing approaches should be developed to ensure children's needs, rights and wishes are consistently respected.
- Improving personal planning will ensure all children receive the right support at the right time.
- Some children need better support from staff to develop emotional resilience and understand their emotions and actions.
- Children should consistently be offered more fun, exciting and challenging play.
- Staff should focus on developing their skills, knowledge and experience, especially in relation to best practice and child development.

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, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there were some strengths and key aspects of performance need to improve to consistently promote positive outcomes.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Most children were encouraged to be independent and make their own choices throughout the day. Families told us that their children were happy, settled and enjoyed their play. They also told us that staff listened to their personal preferences for children. Some children were offered warm and caring support to improve their wellbeing and build their confidence. Staff now need to offer consistently nurturing approaches that ensure all children are enabled and empowered to make choices. We saw some practice which did not respect children's wishes and compromised their dignity and self-esteem. We advised that more sensitive, compassionate approaches should be used to build strong and trusting relationships with children. See area for improvement one.

Personal plans were in place to support children, families and staff in understanding children's progress and development. Basic information about children's allergies, medical needs, likes and dislikes helped the team to offer children the right support at the right time. The expertise of other professionals had informed some plans so that strategies to support individual children were identified. There were times when children's experiences did not match their personal plans. As a result, some children were not consistently receiving the support they needed. Staff should improve the personal planning process so they can respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to children's needs, rights and wishes. See area for improvement two.

Mealtimes offered children independence and encouraged them to make their own choices. Children were offered some nutritious, healthy foods and had access to fresh water and fruit throughout the day. Children were confident in serving themselves and staff sometimes spent time with children as they ate. Mealtimes could be a more social and positive experience for children. Staff should consistently spend time with children to offer them support and build relationships. A few children ate at the snack area several times and we asked the team to be aware of what children ate each day so that this could be shared with families. This will ensure children develop positive relationships with food as they grow and develop.

1.3 Play and learning

Children chose their own play experiences most of the time. Some experiences developed children's interests and broadened their life experiences, for example, spending time in the local community. Building community connections was a strength in the service and we encouraged the team to develop this as they continue to improve children's play. A recent focus on developing literacy and numeracy had been positive and was beginning to support children's progress. A few children had limited opportunities to be included in meaningful and interesting play. This meant there were missed opportunities to support their creativity and imagination. As planned, child-centred planning approaches should be improved so children achieve their full potential. Staff should empower children to lead and influence their own play, guided by a clear idea of what children need from their early experiences.

Staff were beginning to use what they saw in children's play to recognise children's progress and achievements. Some of these observations helped staff to plan additional support for a few children who needed this. A few staff were able to challenge and extend children's thinking when they played with them, helping them to achieve. All staff should improve how they interact with children in their play to develop their curiosity, creativity and imagination. This is especially important in supporting children to develop their emotional resilience. Staff knowledge of child development, relevant theory and practice needs to be developed to ensure that children consistently experience high-quality play and learning. See area for improvement three.

Areas for improvement

1. To consistently respect children's rights, needs and choices, the provider should ensure staff receive and implement training on warm, caring and nurturing approaches that support children's overall wellbeing. This should include, but is not limited to, developing sensitive and compassionate responses to children's actions, emotions and words

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My views will always be sought and my choices respected, including when I have reduced capacity to fully make my own decisions" (HSCS 2.11).

2. To support children's individual wellbeing and enable them to reach their full potential, the provider should ensure that staff use personal planning effectively to respond quickly and sensitively to children's needs. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) implementing any identified strategies to support children consistently in their daily routines
- b) working with staff, children and families to evaluate, develop and implement the key principles of personal planning, namely: being included; promoting positive outcomes, and; learning for improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 1.23).

This is also to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document 'Guide for providers on personal planning: Early learning and childcare'.

3. To support high-quality care, play and learning experiences which promote children's emotional resilience, the provider should ensure staff receive training on child development and relevant theory. Training should be implemented in practice to promote children's wellbeing. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) staff developing nurturing strategies that offer children effective de-escalation techniques
- b) staff empowering children to lead their own play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice (HSCS 4.11).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on children's outcomes and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children had free flow access to both the indoor and outdoor play spaces most of the time. The outdoor play space was inviting and children had fun with their friends exploring the garden. Children were beginning to spend more time in the local community and had already built connections with the local care home, for example. There was a good range of furnishings, equipment and resources for children to choose from and these were mostly appropriate for their stage of development. The team had worked hard to develop the play spaces for children and sometimes reviewed the layout to ensure this met children's needs. We discussed how the layout of the indoor playroom could be improved to use the ample space more effectively, including creating a more homely and comfortable feel. This will ensure that play is sensitive to children's needs, while offering fun, excitement and challenge.

The setting was safe, secure and well-maintained. The team had developed a range of risk assessments which detailed the main hazards that could compromise children's safety as well as measures that were in place to keep children safe. The risk of the spread of infection was minimised because staff understood cleaning arrangements and responded when areas needed attention. Children were encouraged to wash their hands frequently and helped with maintaining the tidiness and cleanliness of their play space. This encouraged them to be responsible and develop life skills. Children's information was stored securely and confidentiality was respected, including in relation to general data protection requirements.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We found strengths which had impacted positively on outcomes for children. There were improvements required to offer children consistently high-quality care, therefore, we evaluated this key question as good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We were confident that the current leadership had the capacity to improve the service in line with our findings. Leadership had recently worked with children, families and staff to renew the vision and values for the service and this offered a good basis for change that everyone had agreed to. The team had worked hard through challenging times to make necessary improvements, for example, in the playrooms and in planning approaches to play. While these still required improvement, we recognised that good progress had been made since the team was formed. Leadership should now build capacity across the team to drive improvement and empower them to take responsibility for making changes that will improve outcomes for children.

Leaders had developed some good systems to understand what was going well, how they knew this and what they could do better. Staff were beginning to use best practice to improve their work and review basic areas such as medication, accidents and incidents. There were some opportunities for leaders to offer staff constructive feedback, for example, giving advice on children's personal learning journeys.

Staff now need to spend more time self-evaluating their own work against relevant quality frameworks, research and best practice so they can consistently improve the quality of children's experiences. A culture of continuous improvement should be embedded which helps staff look inwards, look outwards and look forward. Spending time in high performing services will help them to understand what high-quality care, play and learning looks and feels like for children.

Most families told us that they felt included and respected as part of the nursery community. They liked getting updates through Seesaw, an online learning platform that gave them general and individual updates on their child's experiences. Some parents wanted this information to be shared more frequently. Children and families had been asked for their views and opinions of the service and this had helped to inform some of the improvements planned. Families were beginning to spend more time in the nursery, for example, during an open morning where they could play alongside their child and ask any questions of staff. There are now opportunities to safely build on this good practice and ensure children and families are meaningfully and frequently involved in influencing change. Encouraging families to spend more informal time in the setting will help to build those strong and trusting relationships that are needed to ensure families are fully respected and included in the life of the nursery.

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We made an evaluation of adequate for this key question where there were some strengths but these just outweighed areas for improvement.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were keen to spend time with children and develop their skills so that they experienced positive outcomes. They were building ways to communicate with each other so that they could meet children's needs throughout the day. Staff numbers allowed opportunities for children to experience play in the local community, including trips to the beach and woodland. This helped to offer children some good quality play. While staff numbers were sufficient, the team could be more adaptable and responsive through the day so children are supervised appropriately and offered quality time to build relationships with staff. For example, at busier times of the day such as when parents collect children, better staff deployment would allow children to continue with the full range of play experiences on offer while also ensuring they are safe and cannot leave the premises unattended. Staff should consider how they can change their approach to be less task orientated and ensure children receive compassionate and responsive continuity of care that meets each child's individual needs.

Leaders understood that appropriate staffing was important in ensuring children experienced high-quality care, play and learning. Staff had begun to develop as a team after a period of significant staff turnover. Newer staff were mentored by more experienced staff and they told us they felt supported to understand nursery life in this process. Almost all staff were new to the setting and some were also new to the early learning and childcare profession. As a result, the mix of experience, knowledge and skills was limited and this compromised the quality of children's experiences. Opportunities for professional discussion were challenging and this meant that staff development was insufficient to drive improvement. Careful planning of staff deployment and more effective use of time needs to be prioritised to help staff to develop their skills more quickly in meeting children's needs. See area for improvement one.

Areas for improvement

1. To offer children consistently high-quality experiences, the provider should ensure staff access training that promotes differing experience, knowledge and skills across the team. This should include, but is not limited to:
 - a) planning staff deployment to provide appropriate staff learning and development opportunities
 - b) creating time and space for professional quality assurance and self-evaluation activities
 - c) implementing a clear process for mentoring and supporting the staff team using the skills and knowledge of existing networks.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skills, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14).

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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