

Melvich Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Melvich Primary School
Melvich
Thurso
KW14 7YL

Telephone: 01641 531 200

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 November 2022

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017244

About the service

Melvich Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children, from the age of three years to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery is operated by The Highland Council. The deputy head teacher is the registered manager of the service. The nursery operates term time only.

The nursery is located within Melvich Primary School in Melvich, Sutherland. The nursery premises consists of a playroom with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area which contains a range of loose parts and open ended resources which extend and enrich the children's imaginative play and learning experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 November 2022. Feedback was given to the nursery manager and representatives from the local authority. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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:

- spoke with people using the service
- received three responses from parents via email
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children received very good care and support from kind, caring and nurturing staff who knew them extremely well.
- Snack and mealtimes were relaxed, positive social experiences for children.
- Children were empowered to lead their own play and learning.
- Children were offered exciting and developmentally appropriate play spaces, both indoors and outdoors.
- There was a strong ethos of improvement to support high quality experiences for all children and families.
- Effective staff deployment within the service meant that children received high quality support and interaction.
- Responsive planning approaches required further 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children consistently received very good care and support from kind, caring and nurturing staff who knew them extremely well. This helped children to create strong, trusting relationships with staff. Children were effectively supported through sensitive and thoughtful staff interactions to improve and support their emotional wellbeing. Staff were skilled in using the information in children's personal plans to meet their needs.

Children and their families were valued, included and genuinely cared for by staff. Parents and carers were key partners in supporting children to develop. This enabled families to meaningfully engage in their child's play and learning. A range of strategies and regular opportunities through open days and parent meetings supported children to flourish and achieve. Staff thoughtfully considered the best way to meet each child and their families' individual needs. This significantly contributed to the inclusive ethos of the service. One parent told us "I cannot speak highly enough of the elc staff and Mrs Mackintosh for everything they have done - not only for (child) but myself too. The reassurance and communication from them has been amazing."

Snack and mealtimes were relaxed, positive social experiences for children. Staff recognised the opportunities for learning through these experiences. This contributed to the development of independence skills. Children were fully involved in snack preparation. For example children chopped the fruit and served themselves and each other. Lunchtime provided a positive family experience. Staff sat with children modelling good eating habits. This contributed to a sociable experience and provided opportunities for emerging language skills to be developed.

1.3 Play and learning

Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. Children's voice was highly valued, and they were empowered to lead their own play and learning. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn. Highly effective questioning provided an abundance of opportunities to widen children's thinking skills and consolidated their learning through play experiences. This supported children to achieve their potential.

Children were highly engaged in their play and learning on the day of inspection. Experiences supported children's curiosity, enquiry, and creativity. They were very well supported by staff who confidently scaffolded their learning experiences and joined them in their play. This ensured children had stimulating, challenging and meaningful play experiences providing very good learning outcomes. Children freely accessed toys and resources to extend their play which contributed to them developing a sense of ownership and respect for their environment.

Children's right to play was threaded through planning and the provision of children's play experiences. This contributed to children feeling valued and respected. However the service were in the early stages of developing their planning processes. Children's next steps in learning were not always effectively recorded.

The manager and staff had identified this as a continued area for improvement. They were committed to developing meaningful processes. This was to ensure children were effectively supported to develop a broad range of life long learning skills.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The manager and staff team had worked hard to create an attractive and stimulating environment. As a result children were offered exciting and developmentally appropriate play spaces, both indoors and outdoors. One parent highlighted this as a strength of the service they told us "The staff have created a relaxed, fun learning environment for the children. That is evident by the way the children are so excited to get into nursery each day."

The playroom and outdoor garden space were well thought out and planned to maximise children's play and learning experiences. Children benefitted from a very good range of open ended, natural child centred resources, enabling them to explore their creativity, imagination and problem solving skills. For example children played with real ornaments and everyday items. The benefits of this was highlighted by a parent who told us "It was lovely to see that there were not a lot of toys in nursery but instead a large range of everyday items that the children could touch and play with."

The indoor playroom was decorated in neutral colours which promoted a natural, calm environment. This fostered a welcoming atmosphere for the children. The addition of homely touches and carefully considered furnishings, supported children to feel valued and gave a strong message that they matter.

Children had opportunities to rest and relax in safe, cosy areas indoors and outdoors. Blankets and cushions were available for children to independently access. This enabled children to seek out a calm area where they could have some individual time if needed. This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Children had direct access to the outdoor garden space giving them good opportunities for free flow play between indoors and outdoors. They moved freely between the play areas and engaged in a variety of outdoor play experiences, including playing in the mud kitchen, the outdoor shelter and engaging with natural resources and loose parts. For example on the day of the inspection children were engaged in role play. They had set up a café in the outside shelter and used a real life tea set to support their creativity and imaginative play. This contributed to early literacy and language development.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

There was a strong ethos of improvement to support high quality experiences for all children and families. Extensive and robust quality assurance processes allowed focussed and meaningful opportunities for the manager and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service. This meant that areas for

improvement were identified, shared with staff and actions taken to make positive changes to children's experiences. This resulted in very good outcomes for children and their families.

Regular support and supervision sessions provided an opportunity for staff to be clear on their responsibilities and accountable for their role. We saw evidence of how staff engaged with the process effectively to reflect on and improve their practice which enabled learning to be identified. This resulted in improved outcomes for children as staff were valued and empowered to participate in change. Staff told us they felt very well supported by the manager. This contributed to the ethos of everyone feeling confident to initiate well-informed change and take responsibility for the process. This resulted in high quality play experiences and positive outcomes for children and their families.

Strong leadership resulted in staff who had high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. There was a clear cycle of reflection and improvement within the service. The manager should continue to embed and sustain the high-quality practices to ensure children and families continue to experience very good care and support.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them well. They recognised that continuity of care was important for children. Effective use was made of staff experience, knowledge, and skills, to ensure children's experiences across their whole day was positive.

Effective staff deployment within the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff, consistently throughout the day. The staff to child ratio was very good. This ensured high levels of interaction and quality engagement. As a result children had the right support at the right time. Parents recognised this as a strength of the service. A parent told us "The one to one time (child) gets at times is exceptional." This was echoed by another parent who said "They are extremely nurturing using their staff ratios to their full, (child) leads the play and often gets one to one support doing this. In a short few months (child) is thriving at Melvich ELC."

There was a positive and supportive ethos within the service. Both the manager and staff spoke of the positive relationship that had been formed within the team. The manager had a clear focus on staff well-being and ensured staff felt valued and listened too. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children to feel comfortable and secure in.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.