

Whitecross Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Whitecross
Linlithgow
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 January 2023

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003015571

About the service

Whitecross Primary School Nursery is a daycare of children service situated in a residential area of Linlithgow, close to local transport links, shops and local amenities. The service provides funded early learning and childcare for Falkirk Council, and provides care for a maximum of 24 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time.

The service is situated within Whitecross Primary School. The main playroom is an open plan space with direct access to an enclosed outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 January 2023 between 09:30 and 16:45. Feedback was provided at the end of the inspection visit. 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 throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with several children in the service
- spoke with three families on the day of the inspection
- spoke with the senior leadership team and staff
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were nurturing and caring which enabled positive relationships between children and their families.
- Children led their play and staff were responsive to their interests.
- Staff worked well together and communicated effectively to support children's needs and choices.
- Children benefitted from relaxed, unhurried mealtimes which supported their independence.
- The nursery environment was safe, clean, homely and well maintained.
- The service made very good use of their local environment which supported children to feel part of the community.
- The senior management team and all staff, were dedicated to the ongoing development of the service, to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- Quality assurance processes could be further developed to enhance continuous improvement and measure progress.

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?	4 - 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 found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children's overall wellbeing was supported well as staff responded to them in kind, calm and respectful ways. This helped children to form positive and nurturing relationships.

Mealtimes were a positive, sociable experience for children where they enjoyed an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere. They could choose when they ate, which allowed them to enjoy uninterrupted play. Visual aids supported children to choose what they would like for their lunch and help to plan the snack menu. Children were supported to be independent by pouring their own drinks, serving their own food, and clearing their plates. Staff sat and ate with children which provided a role model to encourage positive eating habits, social interaction, and showed children they were valued.

Children were supported to understand and express their emotions through a variety of resources and planned activities, for example, the 'Friday Feeling' sessions. They used the book 'The Colour Monster' to explore and talk about feelings. As a result, children were supported to develop their ability to self-regulate their emotions, which provided children with important emotional literacy skills.

The service recognised the importance of promoting parental engagement to support children's outcomes. Home visits provided opportunities for children to meet staff before they started nursery and begin to build relationships. There were a variety of opportunities for families to be involved in their children's nursery experiences, for example 'Story and Scone' sessions. One child told us, "I was so happy when my Mummy played with me in nursery".

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were meaningfully and actively leading their play through a variety of open-ended resources available. For example, we saw children building using large play blocks, sewing, and role playing with their friends. These opportunities supported children's choice, creativity and fun.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interests. The service were in the early stages of a new planning system which recorded and monitored children's individual learning and next steps. Due to the early stages of the new system, children's recent progress had not yet been evaluated, however staff could talk positively about how children were progressing.

Floorbooks were used to display photographs of children's play, and staff used these to plan opportunities to extend learning. Regular planning meetings and twice weekly 'huddles', enabled staff to discuss children's play and learning and assess the impact on their progress. This ensured play experiences provided met children's needs and engaged their imagination and learning, which resulted in children having fun and achieving their potential.

Children's learning opportunities were further extended through a variety of resources they could use at home. For example, children benefited from a lending library and a 'blocks box' they could borrow. The service had included a diary which supported parents to understand the learning potential of the blocks and share how they had enjoyed using the resources at home. These resources extended play experiences to develop children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy and allowed families to learn and have fun together .

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from a well-designed nursery environment that was furnished to a high standard, comfortable and safe. Children were confident moving around the spaces available, both indoors and in the enclosed outdoor spaces. This supported them to lead their own play and have fun with their friends.

Children had free flow access to the enclosed nursery garden which provided fun and challenging play opportunities. Skilled staff provided opportunities to extend children's play and learning through effective questioning. For example, we saw children collecting warm water to try and melt ice that had frozen in the mud kitchen, and creating shapes with the snow. This supported children to develop their thinking and learning, and widened their skills while enjoying active play and fresh air.

All staff had a good understanding of children's individual dietary requirements and allergies which resulted in safe food practices. Infection prevention and control procedures further provided high levels of safety for children. For example, children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times. This protected children and staff's overall health and wellbeing.

Children's safety was promoted through risk assessments. These were regularly reviewed, and staff understood their responsibilities to work together as a team to identify and remove risks. Staff spoke with children about safety, which enabled them to benefit from a variety of activities that provided challenge and fun in a safe way. Children had taken part in risk assessing some areas of play, such as the woodwork bench. Staff had used photographs and discussions to include children in the review and assessment of risks with the tools. As a result, children had an enhanced awareness and understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Children benefitted from regular play in the local community including opportunities to take part in 'Forest Friday'. Good use was made of local woodland areas and walks. This supported children to benefit from healthy active play and learn how to be responsible in the outdoors.

Children's artwork and photographs of them enjoying a variety of experiences were displayed throughout the service. This provided children with a sense of ownership of the space. Photographs of staff were displayed with information about them, which supported parents and children to recognise and get to know them.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths taken together, outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A shared vision, values, and aims had been developed in consultation with children, families, and staff. This helped to promote consistent practice as staff understood their role in meeting the needs of children and their families.

Some quality assurance systems were in place. For example, the service had developed a quality assurance calendar to review aspects of practice and parental engagement throughout the year. An improvement plan highlighted specific targets and clear focus areas. This helped the service to set improvements that were achievable, to support positive outcomes for children. For example, a priority for the service was to ensure resources were available that supported children's development in language, numeracy and wellbeing. Staff spoke confidently about recent changes they had made in the environment to ensure opportunities were available that offered challenge, learning, and fun for children. This allowed staff to work well together and understand how they can bring positive changes to children's outcomes.

Regular communication took place with parents and carers and the team had started to gather the views of families about aspects of the service. They used Twitter and newsletters to communicate with families, and had used questionnaires to gather views. This should now be extended to ensure children's views are gathered and show how all responses are used to inform the development of the setting.

All staff had leadership roles and worked well to share responsibilities and develop their areas. For example, a Makaton champion supported children, families, and staff, to learn different symbols to promote the development of important communication skills. The healthy eating champion promoted positive relationships with food, and helped children make healthy food choices. We suggested staff could now be supported to measure the significant positive impact on children's learning outcomes as a result of their roles.

The staff team worked well together, and leaders welcomed feedback and suggestions for improvement. Staff were encouraged to be part of the service development and reflect on their practice together. This showed they were committed to improving outcomes for children.

Staff received regular support from the management team. All staff had opportunities to discuss their role, identify priorities for training, and receive feedback on their contributions to the service improvement priorities. We discussed the benefits of increasing opportunities for supervision and formal reviews, to discuss staff wellbeing and receive more regular feedback on practice. This would further enhance the teams commitment to continuous improvement.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

Staff were warm, responsive, and caring in their approach. They joined in children's play and carefully listened to them to follow their interests. All staff knew children well and understood their individual needs.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring the service was always appropriately staffed. Differing staff hours were managed well to promote continuity of care across the day and enabled positive communication with families at drop off and collection times. Staff understood their roles and were flexible to support children's individual choices, interests and needs. This supported children to have free flow access to the outdoors, choose where they played, and be involved in nursery routines to promote their independence.

Effective use was made of staff experience, knowledge, and skills, to ensure children's experiences across their whole day were positive. Staff communicated very well with each other and worked together as a team to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children. This ensured key tasks and responsibilities could be carried out whilst ensuring continued positive outcomes for children.

Children and families benefitted from having opportunities to develop relationships with all staff in the service. Staff took a shared approach to ensuring all children were supported to achieve their potential. This allowed children to benefit from the range of skills and knowledge of the whole staff team.

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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

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

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