

# Caol Nursery School Day Care of Children

Glenkingie Street  
Caol  
Fort William  
PH33 7DP

Telephone: 01397 703 366

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
9 December 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Highland Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001693

**Service no:**  
CS2003017183

## About the service

Caol Nursery School is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The registered manager for the nursery is the headteacher for Caol Primary School. She has delegated management responsibilities to the deputy headteacher.

The nursery operates from its own dedicated space within the Primary School and new School Campus located in the village of Caol near Fort William. The nursery has a separate entrance away from the main school reception. The premises consist of two playrooms with their own kitchen area, shared toilets and reception area. The children have lunch in the main school canteen. The playrooms had direct access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery also made good use of resources in the local community.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Friday 9th December 2022 between 10:15 and 16:30. 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 12 people using the service
- reviewed feedback from nine families
- spoke with six staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children benefitted from a nurturing, inspiring environment.
- Children were developing their curiosity, imagination and problem solving skills through high quality play experiences.
- Children were very happy and engaged and having fun taking part in various activities both indoors and outdoors.
- Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them very well.
- Staff worked well as a team and were committed to providing children with a service of a very high standard.
- Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care and effective partnerships.
- The service had established very good working relationships with other agencies to support children's care and support needs.
- The service were proposing to develop further the outdoor environment.

## 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

### 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

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

Children were all very happy, settled and comfortable in the nursery environment. They experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. This contributed to children feeling happy and secure. We saw staff being very nurturing, taking time to listen to and respond to children, and offering comfort, cuddles and reassurance when needed. This contributed to positive attachments being formed and children having a sense of belonging and feeling valued.

Staff were welcoming and friendly with an enabling attitude and knew children very well. To support children to be happy and confident, staff had effectively used personal plans to enhance individualised care, support and learning opportunities. Personal plans provided information to support individual children and were used consistently by staff. Activities and experiences were responsive and personalised to meet children's needs and interests. This meant that all children were respected and valued as individuals.

Children and families benefitted from a service that valued the importance of establishing strong working relationships with families to support children. Staff worked in partnership with families when developing personal plans and support strategies. This ensured that children received appropriate levels of consistent care and support. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time, via an online platform and there were opportunities for stay and play sessions.

Parents commented extremely positively about how welcoming and caring the staff were and very appreciative of how they often went above and beyond to meet the needs of the children in their care :

'their outstanding support for families is amazing. They don't just look after the children they will also do everything they can for each family.'

'We have attended stay and play sessions. These were really useful to see how the kids and staff interact and it's clear to us that it's a great environment for our child to develop. We feel the nursery and staff deserve a lot of credit.'

'I am extremely impressed with how the nursery is run and the care my child receives. My child loves to attend this nursery. this is her second year and I have seen a huge difference in her. I am thankful to the staff for making her journey through nursery so easy and enjoyable. I have always been kept well informed about anything happening in nursery that will involve my child. I couldn't ask for a better place for her to attend.'

'All the staff are fantastic and we are so lucky'.

'we have been so lucky with Caol school. They have been so good to us and helped us through so much.'

'The nursery staff are welcoming, approachable and provide a stimulating learning environment for the children to explore and learn in. My daughter has built a positive relationship with the staff, especially with her key worker, who all work hard to help her to grow and learn.'

The service had also established very good working relationships with other professionals to support children with additional support needs. They worked closely with Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychology, a dietician, Occupational Therapy and health visitors. Several parents told us of how the nurse

staff had supported them to access the appropriate services for their children and how the nursery had worked closely with other agencies to meet their child's individual needs.

Children experienced positive snack and lunchtime experiences which were relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Staff were aware of any allergies or dietary needs which helped them to keep children safe. The nursery children had their lunch in the main school canteen. Staff sat with children chatting and modelling healthy eating, creating opportunities for children to develop their language and social skills. We spoke with the deputy head about reviewing arrangements for lunch time to improve the experience for children and to encourage children's independence skills.

Staff were all very aware of their role and responsibility to safeguard children. They had all completed child protection training and fully understood the procedure to follow should the need arise. The staff had a knowledge and understanding of the Care Inspectorate Simoa project - Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

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

Children actively led their play and learning and were happy, confident and engaged in various play activities. They were provided with play and learning opportunities that impacted positively on their development, health, wellbeing and happiness. Children benefitted from uninterrupted play allowing them to become absorbed in their play and have fun. This increased children's happiness and engagement.

Planning approaches were child led and followed children's interests and needs. Play spaces were well resourced and promoted learning through real life experiences. There was a good mix of natural and planned experiences. Children were offered rich, stimulating and interesting experiences which promoted curiosity, imagination, problem solving and collaborative play. Staff were adding further value to children's play and learning through their carefully considered interactions. Staff were skilful in their interactions and engaged effectively with children to extend their learning. Questioning by staff encouraged children to think independently and to reflect, as a result children were respected, valued and achieving.

We recognised high quality play, learning and development was taking place throughout the inspection. Staff ensured that parents were well informed of children's learning and progression. Regular updates, observations and photographs were posted on the online platform and shared with parents. These updates were very much appreciated by parents.

## 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.

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a setting that was very welcoming, clean, and inviting. The playrooms were comfortable and homely and benefitted from plenty of natural light and ventilation. Furniture and resources were of a high standard and organised to support free flow play indoors. Homely touches and natural resources helped children to feel valued and comfortable. Parents spoke highly of the premises - 'The

nursery room is well resourced and organised and promotes independence. The children have access to their garden daily and go on walks to explore the local environment regularly', 'Very safe and secure premises. Lots of great resources.'

There was a system to report any repairs and damaged items were promptly replaced. Infection prevention and control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. There were risk assessments in place which promoted the safety of the children as well as daily checks of the premises. As a result, children's health and wellbeing needs were prioritised.

Children enjoyed access to a well-resourced and well set out indoor play space which provided a rich learning environment. Consideration had been given to the variety of activities and experiences on offer to spark children's curiosity and imagination. Areas within the indoor play space had been set up to reflect the children's current interests and curiosities, with appropriate materials, including natural and open ended resources, to support learning and offer challenge. Resources were easily accessible to children and supported independence, investigation and inquiry. We saw children comfortably explore indoors, select resources and lead their own play.

Staff valued the importance of children experiencing outdoor play regardless of the weather. Outdoor play took place daily, including accessing to the outdoor play area, walking in the community and visiting local resources. Developing outdoor play and learning opportunities was a focus area in the service's improvement plan and included developing the area and ensuring children all had access to the appropriate outdoor clothing during the colder months.

The outdoor area offered children a fun and stimulating space where they could comfortably engage with a variety of creative, open ended and natural resources. The outdoor space, supported children to develop their gross and fine motor skills as well as their numeracy and literacy skills. The children had taken part in planting and growing activities. The day of the inspection was very frosty and the children all had lots of fun investigating ice, looking at the patterns, watching it melt in their warm hands and sliding on the slippery ground. There was lots of positive interactions by staff which supported children to develop their thinking and learning, and widened their skills while enjoying active play and fresh air.

## How good is our leadership?

**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.

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children benefitted from a positive ethos and a culture of continuous improvement. There were identified vision, values and aims for the service which recognised the importance of the ongoing development of the service and the promotion of positive outcomes for children. The deputy head promoted a positive attitude to change and recognised the importance of including all relevant stakeholders in developing a shared vision.

Staff were keen to develop their practice and were very much involved in the evaluation process. They were supported to reflect on the service provided, evaluate learning opportunities and resources available. Staff were able to give any feedback or suggestions they might have about the service and outcomes for children either at full team meetings or during the regular visits to the nursery by the deputy head. Staff felt listened to and their contributions valued by the deputy head and the headteacher, the registered manager.

The service highlighted the importance of involving children and parental engagement in the evaluation process. Consulting and listening to them was a priority for the deputy head and staff. Involving children and their families meaningfully in the continuous improvement of the service contributed to them feeling included. Parents confirmed that they were regularly invited to give feedback. One parent told us 'The staff provide opportunities regularly to give feedback about the service provided and seek ideas on things to improve.' Parents stated that they felt that the deputy head and staff listened to them and took account of their feedback. They explained that as well as being asked for any feedback informally at drop off and pick up times and via the online platform, they also received questionnaires to complete.

Evaluation within the service was underpinned by best practice guidance and supported high quality care and support. Management and staff had a good understanding of 'How good is our early learning and childcare' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare' and used this to support assessment and evaluation within the service.

There were robust quality assurance systems in place. The service had developed a quality assurance calendar to review aspects of practice and parental engagement throughout the year. There was a improvement plan in place which highlighted clear focus areas and identified priority action points. The helped to set improvements which were achievable, to support positive outcomes for children. The improvement plan was widely shared and informed everyone why change was needed and what this change would involve. A priority for the service was to develop further the outdoor space to extend and enrich children's outdoor play and learning. Staff spoke confidently about recent changes they had made to the environment and discuss other changes they had planned.

## 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.

### 4.3 Staff deployment

There was a strong positive ethos within the service where children were valued, trusted and supported through supervised child led play. The staff were skilled, dedicated and nurturing. They were enthusiastic and motivated to providing a positive experience for the children in their care. Staff were respectful and very supportive of each other. They were very warm, caring and sensitive in their approach and demonstrated positive team working which promoted a happy and secure environment for children. They were responsive and respectful of children during interactions and play which supported children to feel safe and secure.

Children experienced continuity of care as staff deployed themselves effectively to ensure high quality experiences throughout the day. They were flexible in their deployment which supported children to lead their play and engage in free flow opportunities whilst remaining safe. Staff worked very well together as a team and their differing skills and knowledge complimented one another and resulted in quality interactions with children. Communication between staff was a strength. They communicated well with each other and worked together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. Transitions were seamless and well planned with children being comfortable about what was happening next. Children were encouraged to feel included, respected and valued as they understood the routines of the day.

The staff knew the children and their families very well and worked to ensure every family was welcomed and valued. This contributed to creating a caring ethos with a strong sense of community and family within the setting. Staff had regular communication with parents and had established positive relationships which enhanced children's experiences and promoted a partnership approach. Having good communication with families contributed to parents feeling included in their child's experiences at nursery and assisted staff when identifying how best to meet children's needs. Parents were all very positive in their comments about staff, their approachability, friendliness and their commitment to provide a positive and fun experience for every child who attended nursery.

## 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).



## 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

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