

Denbeath Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 December 2022

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003017090

About the service

Denbeath Primary School Nursery is located in a residential area of Buckhaven, Fife. The nursery is registered to care for 24 children at any one time and offers full day funded sessions from 09:00 till 15:00. There are parks, shops and other amenities close by.

Children are cared for in a designated playroom in the school building which has direct access to its own outdoor play space. Toilets are directly accessible from the room and there is also a small kitchen area with handwashing facilities. A nappy changing room is available on the opposite side of the school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 6 and Wednesday 7 December 2022. 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:

- spent time with 19 children using the service and spoke with three of their family members
- spoke with seven staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were treated with warmth and kindness by staff most of the time.
- Most children enjoyed playing at nursery and could choose their play independently.
- The outdoor play space was fun and exciting for children.
- The acting headteacher was motivated and committed to improvement.
- Staff would benefit from further training on child development and best practice in meeting children's individual needs, rights and wishes.
- Staff need to follow best practice in administering medication to keep children safe and healthy.
- Play spaces, toilets and the nappy changing room must be improved so they are safe, clean and well-maintained.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes should be improved to secure sustained improvement.
- Stability, consistency and continuity across the staff team will improve children's day-to-day experiences and routines.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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 strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were treated with warmth and kindness most of the time. When they needed reassurance and support, staff responded with cuddles and helped children to feel safe. Staff were beginning to understand children's actions, emotions and words so that they could promote positive outcomes; for example, changing routines to help children feel comfortable at mealtimes. Staff now need to use best practice and research in child development to ensure all children are supported effectively and achieve their potential. See area for improvement one.

Some children needed support with nappies and toileting and we observed some encouraging and nurturing approaches being used by staff at this time. Children were being changed in the toilet area rather than the designated nappy changing room in the school. There were times when children's privacy and dignity was compromised because the toilet door was open and other children could see them being changed. Children's personal care routines should be improved to offer them a warm, caring and nurturing experience that respects their privacy and dignity at all times.

Each child had a personal plan and this detailed some of their likes and dislikes as well as observations of their play at nursery and at home. Some parents and carers told us that they had the chance to talk to their child's keyworker and update any information with them when they needed to. This included information about children's health needs and any medication needed to keep children safe and healthy. Some staff had a limited understanding of best practice in administering medication and we asked the team to ensure this process was clear, concise and appropriate to meet children's needs. See area for improvement two.

Children were encouraged to be independent in their snack routine. They collected their own food and washed their own dishes. They were not as involved in the lunch experience and staff were at the early stages of making this a caring and positive social experience for them. Staff should consider how they can improve lunches so it is unhurried, relaxed and provides an opportunity for children and staff to build strong and trusting relationships.

1.3 Play and learning

Most children enjoyed their play, including spending time singing songs and playing games with staff. They were able to choose where they played and what they did throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors. The outdoor play space offered some creative and imaginative play opportunities and children were most engaged when they played outside. Staff need to consider how they can offer children a more challenging and individualised play experience that respects their needs, rights and wishes. For example, better use could be made of the local community to extend children's play and learning. Improving child led planning approaches will ensure children are empowered to be fully involved. See area for improvement three.

Most children were happy playing together, enjoying each other's company and making their own games. Some children were not fully included in play and learning and we saw children becoming upset and frustrated with each other. This interrupted their play and staff were not yet skilled in supporting children to resolve conflict. Staff should implement clear, shared strategies for resolving conflict, including proactive strategies to minimise disruption to children's play. See area for improvement four.

Areas for improvement

1. To meet children's needs and support them to achieve their full potential, the provider should train staff in relevant best practice and research on child development and support them to implement this in practice.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) child protection
- b) nurture approaches
- c) equality, equity and inclusion
- d) supporting children with additional support needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14).

2. To keep children safe and healthy, the provider should ensure staff implement best practice in administering medication. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) reviewing children's medication needs at least once a term or every three months
- b) detailing signs and symptoms to administer medication on children's care plans

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I am supported and cared for sensitively by people who anticipate issues and are aware of and plan for any known vulnerability or frailty" (HSCS 3.18).

This is to ensure staff knowledge and practice is in line with the Care Inspectorate document 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services.'

3. To support children to achieve their full potential, the provider should ensure staff plan and provide challenging, individualised play experiences through effective observation, assessment and planning. This should include, but is not limited to, improving child led planning approaches and making connections with the local community.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential" (HSCS 1.6).

4. To ensure children have fun as they experience high quality play and learning, the provider should implement clear, shared and proactive strategies to support children in resolving conflict. This should include, but is not limited to, building children's emotional resilience and using restorative approaches in play.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I am enabled to resolve conflict, agree rules and build positive relationships with other people as much as I can" (HSCS 2.15).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We made an evaluation of adequate for this key question. While we identified a few strengths, there were key aspects of performance that needed to improve.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The headteacher had spent a lot of time liaising with the local authority to improve the premises. Some action had been taken to ensure children remained safe and healthy in the school and there was a plan in place to make improvements over time. However, some families were concerned about children's safety when playing in the nursery and there had been a few accidents. There was an unpleasant smell in the nappy changing room and the toilets were cold and unwelcoming. We asked the headteacher to communicate the areas we had most concern about and work to prioritise these improvements as soon as possible. See requirement one.

Staff had worked together to make some changes to the playroom and improve the overall look of the space. There was some good quality furniture available and efforts had been made to make displays attractive so children's work was valued. However, the playroom felt neglected and some areas of the room were unclean, worn and tired. Flooring was difficult to clean and carpets were visibly dirty throughout. Infection prevention and control procedures should be improved to ensure children remain safe and healthy while also repairing or replacing furniture, fixtures and fittings which cannot be cleaned effectively. See area for improvement one.

Children's play outdoors was fun, exciting and creative because there was a good range of resources available to them. The indoor environment was less inviting and there were limited opportunities for children to explore their curiosities and enjoy rich, meaningful play. There was a lack of interesting and engaging resources for children to play with and we asked the team to consider how they can create the best balance between offering children good quality play experiences while keeping them safe. See area for improvement two.

Requirements

1. By 31 August 2023, the provider must ensure that the premises is safe and fit for purpose. This must include, but is not limited to:

- a) providing safe flooring
- b) providing a clean and safe nappy changing area, free from unpleasant smells
- c) providing toilets which can be cleaned effectively to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

This is to comply with Regulation 10(1)(a)(d) (Fitness of premises) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements of Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.17).

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children healthy and reduce the risk of the spread of infection, the provider should ensure that appropriate infection prevention and control measures are in place, in line with current guidance. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) maintaining the cleanliness of the nursery, especially in areas where the risk of infection is high such as toilets and nappy changing spaces
- b) repairing and/or replacing worn and tired furniture, fixtures and fittings
- b) having clear, flexible roles and responsibilities for staff in maintaining the cleanliness of the nursery throughout the day and between sessions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.22).

This is also to ensure that infection prevention and control practices are consistent with the Health Protection Scotland document 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings).'

2. To offer children developmentally appropriate spaces that promote rich and meaningful play, the provider should improve the safety, quality and volume of resources available in the nursery.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity" (HSCS 2.27).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We found that improvements need to be made by building on strengths to address elements that are not contributing to positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as adequate.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The acting headteacher was leading and motivating the team following a period of uncertainty and change. The acting headteacher's vision for the school was ambitious and their values were focussed on building strong, nurturing and compassionate relationships with children, families and staff. Recently, significant improvements had been made to the quality assurance approaches used and this was beginning to improve children's experiences. While we were confident that there was capacity to improve, the headteacher had limited experience of providing high quality care, play and learning in a nursery setting. The headteacher should be supported to make informed changes and drive improvement based on best practice, for example, by putting in place a focussed leadership mentoring programme with more experienced leaders in ELC (Early Learning and Childcare).

Staff had begun to reflect on their own practice using relevant quality frameworks and by visiting other settings. They had taken time to complete a review of the play space and agreed actions for their improvement plan. The team had recently changed significantly and staff brought a range of experience, skills and knowledge. There had been limited opportunities for the team to have professional discussions about their vision, values and aims for children and families. As a result, there were inconsistent approaches being taken to meeting children's needs and this compromised their continuity of care. The team should work together to agree a shared ethos for their practice and promote consistency and continuity for children's care, play and learning. See area for improvement one.

There had been significant changes in the leadership team of the school. This meant that there was less time and capacity to oversee the day-to-day management of the nursery and support improvement. More frequent and consistent oversight and governance of the nursery would help to improve children's experiences and provide leadership for the team. See area for improvement two.

Areas for improvement

1. To provide continuity and consistency of care, play and learning for children, the provider should facilitate professional discussions with staff, children and families about their shared vision, values and aims.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSCS 4.11).

2. To ensure there is sustained improvement of children's experiences, the provider should review the oversight and governance arrangements for the nursery. This should include, but is not limited to, providing appropriate leadership on a daily basis.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (HSCS 4.23).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where we recognised that the service was in the midst of major transition and strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

4.3 Staff deployment

There was a good number of staff available to complete key tasks and this had been maintained through periods of absence. Consistent supply staff were used to cover any absences which helped to minimise disruption to children's routines and experiences. Supply staff told us they felt supported and welcome in the nursery and that they had been given basic information about children's needs.

As a result of the recent and significant changes to the staff team, communication and teamwork was at the early stages. There had been a lack of stability and consistency in staffing which had led to some of the issues we have raised in this inspection. There were times when children were not well supervised and some opportunities were missed to meet children's needs, rights and wishes consistently across the day. Staff now need to improve their working arrangements to ensure all children are well supervised and supported throughout the day. See area for improvement one.

Staff were given time away from the children to update children's personal learning journey folders and meet with the Peripatetic teacher. They also had time at the beginning and the end of the day to meet as a team and complete additional tasks. We asked the team to think about ways they could improve these opportunities so that discussions are focussed on how they meet each individual child's needs, rights and wishes. Working more flexibly as a team and discussing how they will deploy themselves to promote positive outcomes for all children will ensure consistency and continuity of care. See area for improvement two.

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and promote positive outcomes, the provider should ensure staff develop communication and teamwork skills. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring children are well-supervised and having clear roles and responsibilities in meeting children's individual needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I experience a warm atmosphere because people have good working relationships" (HSCS 3.7).

2. To meet children's needs, rights and wishes, the provider should ensure staff are deployed so that they can provide individualised support for all children in a flexible way.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well" (HSCS 3.19)

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

The provider should ensure all care plans are reviewed whenever the provider is requested to do so by the service user or if there is any significant change in a child's health, welfare or safety needs and at least once in every six month period.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 14 - A well managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 7 February 2018.

Action taken since then

Children's personal learning journeys were updated with observations regularly. Parents and carers had meetings with staff every six months to update children's personal information and talk about their child's progress. This was recorded in the personal learning journey. This area for improvement has been met.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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