

Port Elphinstone School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

Port Elphinstone School
School Road
Port Elphinstone
Inverurie
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Telephone: 01467 536 860

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 February 2023

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003015708

About the service

Port Elphinstone Primary School Nursery operates from a designated building in the grounds of the school. It is registered to provide a care service to 20 children at any one time, from three years of age to an age to attend primary school.

Children have access to an enclosed garden, a playroom, a boot room, toilets, and use of the school facilities. Children have opportunities for outings within the community and local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 February 2023. 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:

- reviewed email feedback from six families using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- A highly skilled staff team worked well together to support children well.
- Children and families with English as an additional language were well supported.
- Strong links had been built with the school.
- Children benefitted from a high quality environment that supported their play and learning.
- Personal plans and medications should be reviewed in line with current guidance.
- Children were kept safe through robust risk assessing and policies and procedures.

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 question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

Children benefitted from a nurturing and supportive staff team, who were warm and responsive in their approaches and knew the children well. This enabled individualised care and support for children. Parents told us staff knew the children well. A parent told us: "the staff go out of their way to get to know the nursery children".

Personal plans were being used to support children's health and wellbeing. Every child had a personal plan in place. These gathered information from families and highlighted key needs which supported the staff team to get to know children and meet their needs.

Individual support plans were in place for children with a recognised need. Targeted strategies for support had been identified, helping children to reach their full potential. Parents told us they were aware of their child's personal plans and strategies to support. Information about the child was gathered in: 'All About Me' and was linked to the: 'Getting It Right for Every Child' wellbeing indicators which are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included (SHANARRI). We recommended personal plans should be updated at least every six months in line with current guidance. Personal planning guidance can be found online at the Care Inspectorate Hub.

The staff team had established strong links with a range of professionals to help them fully meet children and the needs of families. Staff told us about support sought from speech and language therapists, hearing specialists and interpreters. A parent told us: "they valued emails being sent in their first language to support communication".

Well considered procedures for the storage and administration of medication supported children's health, wellbeing and safety. Medications were signed into the building and were safely stored. We saw evidence of regular auditing to ensure medication had not expired. In line with current best practice, we advised that medications should be reviewed at least every three months with families.

Snack time was relaxed and an unhurried experience, offering children opportunities to be independent. Children poured their own drinks, used tongs to select their own fruits and prepared their own sandwiches. Staff were responsive and supported where necessary, allowing children to be independent and build life skills.

Lunch was served in the school canteen. This was well managed and it was clear staff had considered individual children's needs. Measures to support children who were sensitive to noise has been considered. This helped to ensure all children were included in the lunchtime experience.

Children had some opportunities to be independent and we discussed how this might be extended. Children benefitted from a healthy and plentiful selection of foods that supported them to be healthy and nourished. We saw staff sitting with children modelling the use of cutlery, offering support and talking with children, which created a relaxed social experience.

Although we did not observe a nappy change, we saw that there were effective procedures in place supporting children's health and dignity. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was used effectively and robust handwashing practices seen throughout the day. This helped to ensure that children were safe from infection.

1.3. Play and Learning

We evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

We observed children choosing where they played, allowing them to be independent and feel respected. A play based approach was firmly embedded within the service, providing children opportunities for a wide range of experiences. Children were leading their own play throughout the day. Staff valued children's interests and supported their play and learning. For example: we saw a staff member respond to a child's request to put on a compact disc. This extended into a conversation around instruments and the staff member supporting the child to research violins on an iPad.

Children were provided with a range of rich experiences providing challenge and supporting curiosity. Children's imagination and curiosity were further supported through the use of loose parts, real and open ended resources. For example: binoculars were provided for children to look at birds. This promoted children's choice, independence and achievements.

The environment was rich in opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy. We saw a range of resources such as scales, books, laptops and binoculars. These allowed children to investigate and encouraged curiosity. We observed staff reading stories, singing songs and modelling language. This supported children to develop skills and achieve .

Children with English as an additional language were supported well by staff who were proactive, responsive and nurturing. Staff used a range of methods such as 'Makaton', visual aids, timetables and responsive interactions to support children to develop vocabulary and understanding. This allowed children to be included and respected.

Staff had a good understanding of child development which allowed them to plan effectively for children in their care. Children's learning was evident through a range of spontaneous and planned experiences which considered their interests and developmental goals. This allowed children to have fun whilst learning.

Children's learning and experiences were being recorded in 'small books'. These books were easily accessible to children in the setting, allowing them to revisit their learning. We saw evidence of children being involved in the development of these. Staff supported children to mark make and add their own pictures. The voice of the child was evident through scribed comments and opinions recorded by staff. This showed children they were valued and important.

We saw meaningful, high quality observations were being completed to effectively record children's learning, successes and achievements. Observations were well written, consistent in quality and identified relevant next steps for individual children. As a result, children were offered appropriate challenge and were supported to achieve. Parents told us they were kept up to date with their child's learning through online platforms.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

The setting was well furnished, cosy and comfortable. It was well ventilated and benefitted from lots of natural light. Children's artwork and mind maps were displayed around the setting giving children the strong message that they matter.

Children benefitted from a recently refurbished playroom with direct access to the outdoor environment. These were developmentally appropriate areas that considered children's interests and needs. For example: we saw resources had been added to most areas of the nursery to support children's interest in birds. This allowed children to investigate and encouraged further learning.

Children had free flow access to a secure outdoor space for most of the day. There were a range of opportunities for different types of play. We saw children being active, participating in risky play and role playing whilst in the garden. Children could access quality resources that supported them to explore, create and be imaginative. The free flow access to a rich outdoor environment allowed children to be healthy, have fun and develop skills.

Risk assessments were well considered for all areas of the setting helping to ensure children were kept safe. We saw evidence of children completing their own risk assessments before going to play in the garden. This enabled children to consider their own safety and develop an awareness of risk.

The service made very good use of available resources within the local community. Children's experiences were enhanced by visits to local parks and woodland. Strong links had been developed with the school. We saw evidence of weekly visits to the primary one class and children making use of the school gym hall. This allowed children to feel they belonged and supported transitions.

There were effective policies and procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection. Staff were seen to be using personal protective equipment effectively when required. We observed staff were handwashing at appropriate times and encouraging children to hand wash effectively. This helped ensure children were kept safe from infection.

Children and families data was well managed and safely stored in a locked filing cabinet.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are well led.

We evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

A shared vision, values and aims had been developed in consultation with staff and families. This contributed to the positive ethos of the setting and encouraged children to be honest, respected, responsible and have fun.

The service valued opinions and involvement of children and families. Regular feedback from families took place through a variety of methods, such as face to face discussions, questionnaires and feedback requests. A parent told us: "the nursery have sought feedback from every stay and play session I have been to. I was asked to complete feedback after my son had started nursery." This enabled children and families to feel valued, respected and included.

The service host regular meetings with parents to discuss children's progression. Staff actively sought solutions to potential barriers for children and their families. For example: translators were accessed for families with English as an additional language and minutes of these meetings were given to families in their first language. This supported families to feel respected and included.

Staff are motivated and passionate in their roles. Staff told us they were well supported and felt confident suggesting ideas and suggesting feedback. This contributed to the positive ethos of the service and outcomes for children.

Quality assurance was carried out and included self-evaluation. Improvement plans were in place, which effectively supported the team to identify areas for improvement and plan changes to develop practice. We discussed how improvement plans could be developed further to break down change ideas, supporting the staff team to measure the impact of the change.

We saw evidence of staff using key good practice documents such as: 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged children' and Care Inspectorate practice notes to support self-evaluation. This supported positive outcomes for children by informing meaningful change.

We saw evidence of effective monitoring of staff practice, with a particular focus on interactions with children. This helped develop staff skills, celebrated good practice and meant that children were cared for by a skilled staff team.

A range of policies and procedures were in place promoting children's health, wellbeing and safety. These were well considered, up to date and relevant.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

4.3 Staff deployment

We evaluated this key question as very good with major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and families

A well-managed and organised staff team supported children's health and wellbeing. Consideration had been given to busier times of the day to ensure ratios were upheld and children were well supported. Staff are clear on their roles at busier times of the day, supporting effective supervision and transitions. This ensured there was no disruption to children's play and learning.

We observed a confident and knowledgeable staff team who were respectful and supportive of each other. They knew each other well and worked to their strengths and areas of interest. All staff had undertaken extensive continuous professional development that supported them to develop their skills. We discussed the value of reflecting on the impact of training on outcomes for children and families.

Procedures were in place to ensure staff were well supported. An induction programme was completed by new staff members. This had been developed using: 'Early Learning and Childcare - National Induction Resource'. This enabled children to access consistent and high quality supports. We suggested this could be further developed to consider reflective questioning. This would further support management to plan specific support strategies for new staff members.

We observed a programme of regular one-to-one and appraisal meetings was in place. This gave staff opportunity to air concerns, share successes and discuss further training needs. Staff told us they valued these meetings. These supported staff to maintain enthusiasm, build skills and develop their practice.

Staff worked well together to ensure children were well supported and supervised. Staff communicated well throughout the day, ensuring they were effectively deployed. Staff are proactive and recognised where they were best utilised. For example: we observed a staff member go inside to support, as there was a larger group of children inside. This effective team working ensured children were kept safe and well supported.

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

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