

Lochnell Pre Five Nursery Unit Day Care of Children

Lochnell Primary School
Benderloch
Oban
PA37 1QS

Telephone: 01631 720 300

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 January 2023

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2004080537

About the service

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 10 April 2004.

Lochnell Pre Five Nursery Unit is provided by Argyll and Bute Council and is situated within Lochnell Primary School. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children not yet attending primary school at any one time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 17 January 2023 and Wednesday 18 January 2023. The inspection was carried out by one early learning and childcare 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 service registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with and observed children using the service.
- Contacted families through email to gather their views.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and confident throughout the inspection.
- Online profiles were providing a link with home.
- Staff and management engaged well in the inspection process and were open and honest during discussions.
- The lunchtime experience should continue to be developed to ensure all children have a positive, enjoyable experience.
- Staff and management should look at developing the play and learning environment to support children effectively, this should include areas for children to rest and relax.
- Management were in the early stages of quality assuring aspects of the service and planning for improvements. Quality assurance processes need to be embedded to secure sustained improvements across the service.
- The service has plans in place to support free flow outdoors and upgrade the nursery outdoor area. We would ask the service to consider developing areas to engage children in challenging activities that develop their problem solving skills and spark curiosity.

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 the strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator - 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were happy and confident throughout the inspection and were able to approach staff if they needed help. Staff were warm, caring and some staff were observed using strategies to support children to have a positive experience for example, picture cards. This was supporting children during transitions. Staff communicated on a daily basis with parents at collection and drop times and through the services online family app, 'seesaw' Parents told us.

'The nursery uses the 'seesaw family app' as well as a quick update at pick up. I enjoy the updates through the app, it's nice to see what my child is learning and see her happy. It also provides a good conversation starter with her and encourages her to talk about her day.'

'We are asked to fill in detailed 'About Me booklets' at the start of each nursery year. We are encouraged and welcomed to keep in regular contact/discussion about ongoing care. The nursery uses 'seesaw family app' updates, parent meetings and stay and play dates which all feed into this positive and inclusive ethos of us all working together'.

Personal plans were being developed from the information gathered in 'all about me' giving staff key information in relation to a child's family, likes, dislikes and interests. We were able to see how staff had used some of this information and how this was being used to take forward some children's learning based on their interest. We found that staff were recording some information to support children's health, welfare and safety needs. To ensure children's needs are met, staff should record children's individual support strategies, identifying 'how' they are supporting children's next steps.

During the inspection we observed the lunchtime experience over two days. We found most staff were supporting children with self-help skills, providing opportunities to develop independence and involving children in setting up and clearing away. However, on day one we observed lunch time to be noisy, disorganised and some of the children were upset. This was not a positive, enjoyable experience for some of the children present. Although most children ate the lunch provided and most staff were supporting the children who didn't want or disliked the hot option, children were not given an alternative option. We would ask management to look into this further to ensure children are given an alternative if they don't eat the hot option for example, providing a sandwich.

After the inspection we received evidence of changes being implemented to support a more positive lunch time experience. We would encourage management and staff to continue to monitor and review the lunchtime experience with a view of ensuring that all children have a positive, nurturing, relaxing experience that considers their individual needs.

During our observations we noticed that some children were requiring individual support to engage in experiences and to play with their peers safely. Although staff were positioned throughout the playroom, the room was busy at times and staff were task focused and they did not always notice when children required support to engage or regulate their emotions. This meant that children's wellbeing and engagement was not always being supported effectively.

Staff and management should look at developing the play and learning environment to support children's individual needs, this should also include areas for children to rest and relax.

There was potential risk to children as medication records were not in line with current best practice guidance. We have asked that this is reviewed and policies are updated in line with current best practice guidance 'Management of Medication in Day care and Childminding Services'. **(See area for improvement 1).**

We sampled accident and incident records and asked management to audit these to identify common or reoccurring concerns. This should include any actions in relation to the environment, resources and individual children to identify any common patterns, appropriate action should be taken where required.

We did not see children having regular access to fresh water throughout the day. This should be offered to ensure that children remain hydrated.

Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They had attended child protection training and knew how to address any concerns appropriately.

Quality indicator - 1.3 Play and learning.

Children appeared happy and busy and enjoying their time at nursery. Staff had developed some areas of interest to engage children's imagination and develop their language, literacy, numeracy and wellbeing, for example, block play, sand, home corner and mark making. We saw some evidence of children's views being used to shape the environment and some spaces reflected some children's current interest. For example, staff and children had developed information and play spaces to reflect the 'Titanic' after a child visiting Belfast.

Although planning approaches were in place, we observed some missed opportunities to extend children's play and learning experiences. On several occasions we observed children that were disengaged, and not being sufficiently stimulated or challenged. We found play and learning required to be developed further inside and outside to include more opportunities to actively involve children in leading their own learning. For example, most experiences on offer were adult led or chosen by staff, some activities did not contain the appropriate resources. We observed no paper at the painting easel, jigsaws with inadequate pieces, broken musical instruments, no aprons at water play and limited resources for children to use their imagination and be creative.

Play spaces should be developed to ensure that they reflect children's interests and support them to make progress in their learning. Management and staff should look at creating an environment that inspires children's imagination with a focus on loose parts play and natural and open-ended resources. This would support and develop children's natural curiosity, sense of wonder and fun through promoting independence and offering challenge. Management should also continue to monitor staff interactions to ensure they are extending children's thinking and widening their skills. This will then support children in developing and leading on their play and learning. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection and we did not evidence this has improved, therefore will be repeated. **(See area for improvement 2)**

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and healthy, management should update the medication policy, guidance and recording of medication procedures in line with current best practice guidance 'Management of Medication in Daycare and Childminding Services'.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

2. To support children's play and learning management and staff should look at creating an environment that inspires children's imagination with a focus on loose parts play and natural and open-ended resources. Also providing children with more challenging opportunities to discover, explore, experiment, problem solve and wonder. With consideration to.

(a) Developing children's natural curiosity, sense of wonder and fun through promoting independence and offering challenge.

(b) Management monitoring staff interactions to ensure they are extending children's thinking and widening their skills.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling (HSCS. 1.30) 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials. (HSCS 1.31)

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where the strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator - 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were cared for in an environment that enabled them to feel welcome, accessing most play spaces independently. Staff also accessed the wider surrounding community which gave children opportunities to run, explore and investigate. Furniture was child sized and there were some soft furnishings for relaxation and comfort for children to relax. Children had space to play in small groups and by themselves.

Main exits were secured and there was an expectation that visitors signed in and out of the service. We sampled risk assessments in place to support a safe environment and also when children were accessing areas out with the nursery. These had been updated and were reviewed regularly or when any changes occurred supporting staff to keep children safe.

During the inspection, we identified several maintenance issues within the inside and outside area of the nursery that required action. We discussed these with management who confirmed they were in the process of addressing areas of concern and recent plans had been developed to improve the indoor and outdoor area. **(See area for improvement 1)**

During the inspection we only observed children accessing outdoors on the first day of inspection. We discussed this with management and staff who should ensure children are having more regular access to outdoors to support their health and wellbeing and that children have the option to play outdoors at a time that suits their needs. **(See area of improvement 2)**

Overall, staff demonstrated good practice in infection prevention and control. For example, children were reminded to wash hands at appropriate times such as before eating which encouraged them to develop healthy habits and staff wiped down surfaces prior to children eating. However, we did discuss with management and staff the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and that children had access to tissues when requiring to clean their nose. During the inspection staff and management addressed areas identified.

Areas for improvement

1.

To ensure children experience a high quality environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment that is safe and secure. The provider should review and undertake appropriate maintenance within the inside and outside of the nursery with a focus on;

- Ensuring main toilet door is closing securely and children can open and close independently.
- Replacing missing toilet cubical door.
- Ensuring children have an appropriate area to shelter when outdoors.
- Ensuring decking area is safe for all children to access.
- Ensuring a suitable temperature in the cloakroom area that provides a warm welcoming environment and supports the storage of outdoor clothing.
- Ensuring cloakroom area is decluttered to support a safe, inviting, and welcoming environment for children and families.
- Ensuring wall displays for parents are up to date for example; with current information on staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22). 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17)

2. In order to support children's health and wellbeing and that children are having the option to play outdoors at a time that suits their needs. The manager should develop room monitoring arrangements to ensure all children can choose when they access outdoors with a focus on a safe area to access with more exciting and challenging outdoor play experiences.

This is to ensure children access daily fresh air and a well maintained outdoor environment consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32), and 'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors'. (HSCS 1.25)

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where the strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator - 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led.

We found the management team engaged well during the inspection process, taking on advice and support, demonstrating a commitment for improvement. We acknowledge there have been a change in the management structure and management were open and honest in relation to the challenges the service had faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. We recognise the team is continuing to develop the service for the children and families. Parents told us.

'The nursery seems well run and all the staff are visible and they rotate the cloakroom on a weekly basis so you always get a chance to see and chat to all of the team. If I've ever requested to speak to someone in particular it's never an issue'.

'My child adores everything about nursery and is making fabulous progress, huge thanks to the whole team for their dedication, professionalism and hard work'.

We understand the service is in the early stages of supporting staff with leadership and champion roles. For example, additional support needs, family learning, loose part play, maths, and numeracy. This style of leadership can support staff's individual strengths and contribute to improved experiences for children and we encouraged this to be progressed.

We acknowledged that the service had plans in place to support improvement. The service had started familiarising themselves with 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged childcare'. There was some evidence of reflection by the staff team. Management should build on the steps taken so far, ensuring reflections are continued and developed in partnership, to support understanding across the nursery.

We found management had also developed an improvement plan identifying some service priorities. For example, to enhance nursery environment in response to 1140 provision, support practitioners to have the confidence and skills to lead learning, implement challenge and progression, leading to learners being fully engaged and immersed in learning experiences. Staff will undertake observations on the learning environment on a weekly basis and the environment will be adapted based on observations and learner voice to ensure engagement and learning needs are met.

However, these processes were not yet regular or robust enough to ensure procedures were consistently followed or to secure sustained improvement. Quality assurance, including monitoring and self-evaluation now needs to be more firmly embedded into the process of evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole. It would be helpful for the manager to visit the Care Inspectorate HUB where they will find 'The Model for Improvement' which provides a framework for developing, testing and implementing changes. This would enable the manager to monitor change and the impact to support more reflective practice and improved outcomes for children. **(See area for improvement 1).**

Areas for improvement

1. To improve better outcomes for children. Management should develop and implement robust quality assurance systems with a focus on, monitoring children's play and learning experiences, monitoring of staff practice and evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards that state; 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where the strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator - 4.3 Staff deployment.

Staff were welcoming, engaged well in the inspection process and were open and honest during discussions. Most of the staff team worked well together and met weekly to discuss children, the operational functions of the nursery as well as planning. However, during the inspection, we identified a lack of leadership within the nursery as they do not have a senior or lead practitioner within the service. Staff at times were not always working together as a team and we observed periods when staff did not communicate effectively with each other. For example, during lunch time when some children required support, at periods throughout the session staff were task focused, disengaged and not aware of the surrounding areas.

Staff told us, the management team has an open-door procedure that supports them to discuss any concerns. However, the team felt that concerns were not always dealt with directly. We found that staff would further benefit from more frequent opportunities to meet with the manager to discuss how the nursery is progressing, any challenges, planning, individual children and staffing issues. This would support the staff as a team to ensure they are developing the service for children and families as well as opportunities to discuss areas of change.

Monitoring of staff practice and the environment was infrequent and did not benefit the service. Some staff supervision had taken place, however, staff told us they felt that this was not always effective. Management and staff now need to build as a team on their experience and expertise to fully meet the needs of the children's through developing the deployment of the team and revisiting the pace and balance of the day. Highly effective supervision would provide an opportunity for staff to be clear on their responsibilities and accountable for their role. Performance should be constructively reviewed, and effective support planned and evaluated. **(See area of improvement 1)**

Staff were safely recruited and were registered with Scottish social services council (SSSC) to protect children and keep them safe from harm and abuse. This approach ensured that children were valued, safe, and secure.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure positive outcomes for children management should monitor and review the deployment and positioning of staff with a focus on staff responsibilities, engagement and effective supervision.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15). '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

Children's personal plans should be further developed and consolidated to fully reflect what they are learning and achieving, as well as enable them to capture and investigate their own ideas and lead on their learning.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life, which state: 1.15 My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices. 1.19 My care and support meets my needs and is right for me. 1.23 My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected.

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2019.

Action taken since then

We sampled personal plans and information held for individual children. We were satisfied staff were gathering most relevant information required to support children. We discussed developing the recording of information to identify clearly 'how' staff will support children.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Staff should provide children with more challenging opportunities to discover, explore, experiment, problem solve and wonder.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards. My support, my life, which state: 2.27 As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that 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.

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2019.

Action taken since then

We did not observe or find evidence that the service has supported children with more challenging opportunities to discover, explore, experiment problem solve and wonder.

This area for improvement has not been met and will be repeated under quality indicator - 1.3 Play and learning.

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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