

Portlethen Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Portlethen Primary School
Cookston Road
Portlethen
Aberdeen
AB12 4PT

Telephone: 01224 472 845

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 February 2023

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003016332

About the service

Portlethen Nursery provides a day care of children service in the Portlethen area of Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to provide a day care for children service to a maximum of 80 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school. Of those 80 no more than 10 are aged 2 to under 3.

The service is based in a residential area of Portlethen and is close to local shops, parks, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 02 February 2023 between 09:15 and 17:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 03 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:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed documents
- spoke with children using the service and 10 of their family members.

Key messages

- Children attending the service were happy, settled, having fun and engaged in their play.
- A wide range of high-quality resources promoted quality play experiences for children both indoors and outdoors.
- Staff worked well together and communicated effectively to support children's needs.
- The senior had implemented a robust approach to self-evaluation and on-going improvement within the service.
- The service should review the structure of their day to minimise interruptions to children's play, ensuring that these are purposeful and effective.

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?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support.

Children benefitted from staff who knew them well and effectively met their needs. Parents commented that staff go 'above and beyond' to meet their child's needs. Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children, sharing laughter together. Interactions with children were quiet and sensitive, which developed close bonds with staff. For example, staff were observed sensitively supporting children to resolve conflicts, using short and simple phrases, to promote positive choices in play. Staff mostly engaged in purposeful interactions with children using commentary, which added value to play. We suggested staff review the adult role, at times, to avoid being task focussed and to ensure opportunities to further promote shared interactions are not missed. For example, one child's interest in pressing bubbles was stopped due to staff redirecting to tidy-up time. This meant opportunities were missed to engage in interactions to develop shared communication.

Detailed personal plans were in place for each child, which provided accurate and current information, to support staff to meet the needs of the children. Staff should ensure these are completed in full and are consistently signed by staff, as well as parents. Plans were in place to identify strategies for children with additional needs. These included strategies to help children to progress and achieve. We discussed that these should be consistently reviewed and updated, to enable staff to effectively meet children's needs. We found that some strategies within children's plans conflicted with our observations during the inspection. We suggested staff develop a consistent approach to these. Makaton was effectively used across the whole nursery during interactions with children. This created an ethos of inclusion and valued children's individual communication styles.

A medication audit was in place, however, we suggested staff develop a more robust procedure to identify any discrepancies. This would ensure that forms are signed and paperwork is effective in meeting children's wellbeing needs.

Mealtimes provided children with a nurturing experience where children's choice, wellbeing and life skills were developed. Children's independence skills were promoted, as they were responsible for preparing snack and setting the table for lunch. At lunch, food was placed in the centre of the table and staff encouraged children to share this between each other. This respected children's rights, as they were able to select what and how much food they wanted, which promoted healthy eating habits. Staff sat with children during lunch promoting positive conversation. Children were observed to become restless over the lunch period due to long waits between meals. We suggested staff review the structure of the lunch experience to continue to develop children's independence and choice. This would promote a calm and unhurried experience.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and Learning.

Overall children were engaged and seen to be busy and purposeful at play. They had good opportunities to lead their own play and learning, which impacted positively on their development and wellbeing. We saw them playing and interacting with each other, using a range of resources that developed their problem-

solving skills, creativity and imagination. For example, children were observed playing in the water tray using shapes and pretending these were boats. Children outside were developing their critical thinking skills, as they explored the movement of water. Children worked together to move water from the water tray to a wheelbarrow and transported this to the guttering. They then watched as the water moved along the pipes and back to the tray. This contributed to children feeling valued as they were able to lead their own play.

Children's developing language, literacy and numeracy skills were promoted across the nursery. Opportunities for emerging writing as well as counting, sorting and matching were available indoors and outdoors. This provided opportunities for children to learn key skills through play experiences.

For the majority of the time, children benefitted from uninterrupted play allowing them to become absorbed and have fun. This increased their happiness and engagement levels. However, on occasion, children's choice in their play was restricted. At times, children's play and learning was interrupted to undertake adult directed activities. This was particularly evident during times of transitions. For example, before lunchtime, staff became task orientated. This significantly reduced children's engagement levels. To limit interruptions to children's play experiences we asked the management team to review some of the arrangements in place.

Observations recorded children's ongoing learning and development, however, at times these were adult focussed and did not effectively capture children's natural learning through play. Children's voice was captured through the use of floor books, which were used to inform planning within the service. We discussed reviewing planning approaches to ensure they fully reflect children's interests. This will enable children to make informed choices and lead their own play and learning by following their interests.

The service had reintroduced connections for children within the community. The children had opportunities to visit the local library and participate in Bookbug sessions. Children also accessed the school library, which developed their awareness of the school building. This supported children to develop a sense of belonging within their community.

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.

The setting was safe, secure and had been well laid out to provide a welcoming and nurturing environment for children to take part in play and learning. Children had ample space to move freely between areas and take part in floor play or tabletop activities. Quiet areas had been developed to promote children's wellbeing and provided a space for rest or relaxation. Displays around the room highlighted children's work, interests, and family members. This promoted a sense of belonging and respect for children's lives.

Children enjoyed access to a well-resourced and well set out indoor play space, which provided a rich learning environment. Areas within the indoor play space had been set up to include natural and open-ended resources, which offered challenge. Resources were easily accessible to children and developed independence, investigation and inquiry. We saw children comfortably explore indoors, select resources and lead their own play. Staff shared that the outdoor space was organised to reflect the learning within the indoor activities. Only a small number of children accessed these opportunities outside. Staff commented

that children did not like being outside in the cold. Staff should continue to reflect on children's motivations and interest to promote the outdoors as a positive learning space.

Staff communicated well together to minimise any potential risks within the environment. Children were monitored and supervised during indoor and outdoor play. Risk assessments were in place for all areas of the nursery and were regularly reviewed and updated to keep children safe. Staff worked well together to provide a safe environment for children to play and have fun during their learning. This ensured that children's safety was always maintained.

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.

Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Children benefitted from a positive ethos and a culture of continuous improvement. There was an identified vision, values and aims for the service, which recognised the importance of positive outcomes for children. The senior promoted a positive attitude to change and recognised the importance of including all relevant stakeholders in developing a shared vision. For example, the vision, values and aims was attractively displayed for children within the playroom, which highlighted their involvement in its creation through photographs.

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 senior 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. Parents commented positively on the use of the Family App to keep them informed and included in the life of the service. Floor books were used to effectively consult with children on a range of topics. For example, children were involved in risk assessing play experiences. This valued children as experts in creating a safe space to play.

There were robust quality assurance systems in place. The service had developed a quality assurance calendar to review aspects of practice throughout the year. There was an improvement plan in place, which highlighted clear focus areas and identified priority action points. This helped to set improvements, which were achievable and provided positive outcomes for children. There were limited opportunities for staff to meet as a team. We suggested that the management team review these opportunities to ensure effective communication. This would further support the ongoing development of priorities within the improvement plan.

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.

The staff team worked well together, which created a positive atmosphere where staff were courteous and respectful of one another. This provided a happy, safe and relaxed environment for children. Staff displayed warmth and kindness, which enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure. They recognised the

importance of nurturing, warm and responsive attachments. Parents commented positively on the attachments they had formed with staff. For example, one parent commented that staff were very supportive in helping to meet their child's needs.

Staff were consistent in their engagements with children demonstrating an awareness of key strategies in place to meet individual needs. For example, Makaton was used effectively when interacting with children, which promoted an inclusive learning environment. One parent commented, 'I think the nursery team are a fantastic team that do so much for the children.'

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. Positive 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 commented positively about staff, their approachability, friendliness and their commitment to provide a positive and fun experience for their children. One parent commented, 'the level of care and attention we receive from the nursery is exceptional.' This demonstrated that families had developed trusting and responsive relationships with the service.

Peer monitoring was embedded within the service and staff shared that they used this as an opportunity to learn from each other and feedback what they are doing well as a team. New staff commented that they felt well supported when entering the service, as a new team member. This meant that staff felt valued, which further promoted positive outcomes for children.

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 toilet area used by the nursery should be given attention. This area is in need of repainting and upgrading. This is to ensure the toilets are more pleasant and suitable for use by the younger age group.

Reference: National care standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2: a safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2017.

Action taken since then

The toilets have been refurbished. 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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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