

# Meiklemill School Nursery Day Care of Children

Meiklemill School Nursery  
Provost Davidson Drive  
Ellon  
AB41 9BQ

Telephone: 01358 281 100

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
9 March 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000029

**Service no:**  
CS2003015707

## About the service

Meiklemill School Nursery is part of Meiklemill Primary School. It is situated in Ellon, close to local amenities such as parks and shops. Children have access to a purpose-built playroom which includes kitchen and cloakroom areas. The playroom has direct access to a dedicated outdoor play area. Children also access the school playing fields.

The service is provided by Aberdeenshire Council and is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 72 children aged from 2 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time of whom no more than 5 are under 3 years old. At the time of inspection the nursery had 43 children registered with them.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between on 6 March 2023 from 09:15 to 16:20, 7 March 2023 from 08:05 to 10:20 and 8 March 2023 from 11:00 to 14:40. 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 children using the service and four of their parents/grandparents
- received seven emails in response to our request for feedback
- spoke with staff and management
- observed children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children received warm, nurturing care.
- Staff were responsive to changes in children's interests which enabled them to reflect these in the opportunities to play.
- A variety of methods of communication were in place to support communication with parents. Most parents told us that communication was good.
- The environment was warm and comfortable and resources were well maintained.
- There was an ethos of reflection and improvement.

## 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?	4 - 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

We found significant strengths of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Interactions between staff and children were warm and nurturing. Children were relaxed and confident in approaching staff for reassurance or support or to invite them into their play. Where children needed extra support, with communication for example, this was agreed with parents to support a consistent approach and reflect parents' wishes. Staff were confident in discussing individual children, their needs and any support that was being given. We observed agreed strategies of support being used to promote children's care and learning.

Most parents felt that staff knew their child well. Comments included, "Support from nursery has been great - staff always helpful with my child's needs and interests" and "My child feels comfortable and staff all know them by name - activities provided appeal to child's interests as a result of their knowledge". One or two parents felt that not all staff knew their child with one saying, "Some staff do not know my child's specific requirements and must not have read their care plan".

Children enjoyed snack and mealtimes which were relaxed and unhurried. Staff sat with children at these times, which promoted positive relationships. Children's communication and language was encouraged through discussions on a variety of topics. There were opportunities for children to further develop their independence and life skills through involvement in the preparation and serving of their food. Where children needed support, this was given discreetly and with warmth and encouragement. Children's health was promoted and parental preferences reflected through staff awareness of any allergies or dietary requirements.

Personal plans were in place for all children. These contained information on children's home routine, preferences, medical details and any strategies of support that were being implemented. This supported a continuity of care and enabled staff to promote children's wellbeing using relevant and up to date information. The samples we looked at had been reviewed by staff and parents and reflected the support we saw being offered to children.

Children's health was promoted through the safe storage of medications. Where children required medical care information was recorded and staff were made aware of any changes using a 'read me' file.

Children's safety and wellbeing was promoted as staff showed a good understanding in their role of identifying, recording and referring any safeguarding concerns. Policies and regular training were in place to support this. Staff were confident in discussing how and when to involve other agencies to support children and their families.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun while in the nursery, they were relaxed and confident in the daily routines. Most children were engaged in their activities throughout the day. They were able to choose where to play and could access most resources independently. Staff were skilled in supporting children to engage in

spontaneous play. Helping them to consider what they needed for their play or craft activity and encouraged their independence in accessing resources.

Most parents told us they were kept informed of their child's learning and development but a few parents felt communication in this area could be better. Comments included, "My child has made great progress, staff really know them and support development, I receive photos and videos as well as written information via evidence me" and "Support from nursery has been great, staff always helpful, weekly email on things that my child has done," while another said, "Communication is very poor, evidence me isn't updated regularly". We discussed this with the manager who agreed to audit the impact of the communication methods and promote equitable communication with all parents.

Children were supported to feel part of their community through the daily use of local amenities. This included daily trips to the local wooded areas or parks as well as accessing the local shops and libraries. Children's sense of empathy and compassion was supported through participation in local activities such as book sharing.

Children's interests and curiosities were responded to by staff. Snow was brought in for some children to play with and boxes supplied for den building during our visit. However, we suggested that perhaps swapping out some of the resources that were not being used to support this further.

Children benefitted from interactions with staff which extended their learning. This included supporting them to plan and problem solve. Opportunities to develop skills in numeracy were available throughout the session. This included the use of smart board and more spontaneous activities such as matching and counting utensils when laying the table. Literacy was supported by the availability of books and mark making within different areas as well as discussions with staff. Spontaneous singing and storytelling took place with individual children. This included the use of musical instruments to tap out rhythms and beats, supporting children's language development.

## How good is our setting?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths 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

The environment was comfortable and welcoming for children. It was bright and airy and there were places to store their coats and belongings safely. There was a quiet area where children could go to rest or when they needed a calmer environment. Children had space to move around freely but in some areas there was not enough room for children to extend their play. Staff responded to this by moving resources and furniture to accommodate children's play throughout the day. Plans showed how the layout of the room and the different zones was reviewed and changed regularly in response to observations of how children were using the space.

Children's safety was supported by the risk assessments which were in place. These covered the indoors and outdoors as well as individual children's needs. The nursery was safe and secure with controlled entry and an enclosed outdoor area. Staff took immediate action to remove hazards such as drying the wet floor. They involved the children in this encouraging them to identify the risk and consider how to manage it. The characterisation of the wellbeing indicators such as 'Safe Sam' supported children's awareness of their

health and safety. Staff had a good awareness of where children were and walkie talkies were used to effectively communicate with groups out in the community.

Children's health was supported by the infection prevention and control measures taking place. Staff had a good understanding of their role in maintaining a clean environment and a risk assessment and policy supported this. Children's health was further supported by daily access to the outdoors. This included the designated nursery outdoor play area, school playing fields and local areas. Although children had a choice on whether to go outside or not there was no free flow access. We discussed this with the manager who appreciated that this limited children's choice and explained the reasons for this. They agreed to continually review the situation and implement free flow access to the outdoors whenever it was safe to do so.

## How good is our leadership?

**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service's vision and aims, were displayed and shared with parents and school community. This promoted an awareness of what is important for the setting to meet the needs of children. Regular meetings were held to support the review and evaluation of the service by staff. This included team meetings and individual meetings with the manager. Staff told us they felt confident in making any suggestions and involved in any changes implemented to improve the provision. There were some opportunities for staff to build and share their confidence and skills through leadership opportunities. We suggested that these could be built on to further promote a sharing of experience and knowledge within the staff team.

Audits were taking place such as a review of information held in children's records and the tracking of children's learning and development. These supported the manager to have a good overview and fed into the self-evaluation process. The awareness and use of best practice documents supported the self-evaluation and promoted positive outcomes for children.

There were opportunities for parents to feedback through comments on the evidence me app, approaching staff at handover times or completing survey questions. However, there was limited uptake on this. While most parents agreed that the staff and manager were approachable some felt they had not been consulted. Comments included "I haven't been asked for feedback" and "No parent participation at all within the nursery - why can't we be invited in to stay and play sessions that have happened in the past". We asked the manager to continue to consider the best way to gain constructive feedback for use in the evaluation of the service.

An improvement plan was in place and currently identified two to three areas where developments were taking place. We suggested that there could be more detail in the plan to support a positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes. This included having clear and measurable success criteria which focused on outcomes for children.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths 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

Children's needs were met as the manager and provider recognised the importance of having appropriate staff numbers throughout the day. This included planning for staff breaks and busy times such as meals and pick up times.

Children were allocated a key worker who maintained records of their development and learning and was a point of contact for parents. Parents told us that staff were approachable and most felt that they knew their child well. However, one or two parents raised the issue that there had been frequent changes of key worker. We discussed this with the manager who agreed that minimising changes was a priority. They showed records of how children were prepared for any long-term changes and parents were informed. Photos of staff were displayed in the cloakroom area to promote awareness of individual staff members. Children were keen to show us which group they were in and two pointed out their key worker's picture.

Children benefitted from a staff team which was well established and had a range of experience and skills. Good communication and regular team meetings supported the sharing of these. Role modelling for less experienced staff was also promoted. Staff communicated well with each other. They showed respect and consideration in their interactions with each other as well as with the children. This promoted a happy atmosphere for children to enjoy.

Staff were flexible in how they met the children's needs. They showed a good awareness of where children were and knowledge of when interventions supported children's positive experiences. There were some allocations of tasks in particular areas and at certain times. Communication between staff promoted flexibility at these times so that children's play and support was not interrupted.

Staff were recruited safely through the local authority recruitment processes. A recorded induction period was in place. The national induction resource was used to support the induction and encourage staff to reflect and evaluate their practice.

## 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good



## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.