

Sgoil Araich nan Loch Day Care of Children

Sgoil nan Loch
Leurbost
Lochs
Isle of Lewis
HS2 9BE

Telephone: 01851 705 187

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 August 2023

Service provided by:
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Service provider number:
SP2003002104

Service no:
CS2005113754

About the service

Sgoil Araich nan Loch is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children from the age of two years to those not yet attending primary school. The service provides Gaelic and Gaelic learners education in two rooms within Sgoil nan Loch.

The nursery provides pre-school education in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Children are funded for pre-school education from the age of three years.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 August 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:

- spoke with children using the service
- received electronic feedback from five parents/carers whose children attend the service
- spoke with management and staff team
- received electronic feedback from four staff who work in the service
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, secure and confident in their nursery environments.
- The management and staff team were committed and motivated to lead and make improvements to improve outcomes for children and families who use the service.
- The planned refurbishments of toilets for children in the Gaelic room needs to be prioritised and carried out.
- The service should continue and further develop their plans to clean up and improve the outdoor learning opportunities for children outdoors.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - 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 evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and settled in the setting. They were confident in the care of staff and approached them for support when needed. Staff interactions were kind, warm and nurturing, helping children feel safe and loved.

Staff had sound knowledge of children in their care and confidently discussed how their needs could be met. Personal plans were in place for all the children; however, we noted that not all personal plans detailed the information that staff had about children. There was an element of confusion around personal plans because they were not always being reviewed or updated consistently. Staff should use the review section of children's plans to record current needs and strategies needed to support individual children. We also noted that children's personal plans were stored in the manager's office. This made it difficult for staff to access easily, review or update. One parent who provided feedback told us "Asked to update care plan. Apparently not kept in room but up in the head teacher's office. This is inconvenient as staff have to leave the room (could be putting them out of ratio) and this is a working document". Manager should review the current arrangements for the storage and accessibility of personal plans.

Mealtime experiences for children had improved. The manager told us how she and staff had audited mealtimes and carried out small tests of change. As a result, children were receiving a more sociable, less hurried mealtime experience. Staff recognised that there was still some work to do to make further improvements. We agreed and suggested that staff continue to improve mealtime experiences for children by ensuring that staff members sit with children and encourage independence.

We looked at how the service managed the safe storage, recording and administration of medication. We found that although there were no registered children who require medication at the time of our inspection, safe systems were in place for the safe storage, recording and administration of medication.

Quality indicator 1.3: Care and learning

Meaningful praise and skilful interactions encouraged children to explore their surroundings. We observed children having fun as they independently explored play experiences and activities were easily accessible, promoting choice. Effective questioning used by some staff promoted children's thinking and understanding. This led to extended play and learning for some individual children.

Children were able to choose where they wanted to play. The new layout of the classrooms meant that children from both Gaelic immersion and Gaelic learners could learn and play with children across the early level of the school. This supported children to be able to learn from their peers and strengthened the transition from nursery into the school. Staff and management told us they were seeing a positive impact on children's progress in literacy as a result of the integrated early level.

The service had recently introduced a new child led approach to planning for children's learning and development. Although in the early stages, we could see through observations and big books of learning how children were leading and initiating their learning experiences. Big books were linked to the curriculum for excellence experiences and outcomes in the early level. Children had ownership of and were proud of their big books. We could see that children had been involved and consulted about their learning. Photographs and comments added by staff enabled children to revisit and consolidate their learning by revisiting key moments with their peers and staff.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an environment which was warm, bright, and welcoming. The setting was well-maintained and there was a good range of quality resources and furniture.

Children could easily and confidently access resources which they were interested in. We observed staff skilfully interacting with children to enable them to make the best use of resources available to them. We discussed with manager how on some occasions resources in the Gaelic learner's room were cluttered and a little more difficult for children to access. We also identified times where clutter raised concerns around infection prevention and control. For example, we saw children's snack dishes being left to be washed in the hand washing sink within the playroom. Staff must ensure that sink areas remain free from clutter and that handwashing sinks are used solely for the purpose of handwashing. (See Area for improvement)

The management and staff team had identified within the service's improvement plan the need to audit and improve resources and experiences for children outdoors. Although children had access to outdoors and spent a lot of their time outdoors, we observed some resources to be dirty and broken. A big clean-up of the outdoors had been planned involving children and families. We identified some potential risks to children associated with the outdoors and resources, for example, we pointed out where tyres had been stacked against a wall which have potential of giving children easy access to climb and get out of the secure playground area. In addition to this we pointed out where rainwater had gathered in troughs and other containers which may have caused potential harm to children. Staff needed to take more responsibility tidying up and supporting children to tidy up and care for resources. Some parents who provided feedback highlighted some issues around the outdoor environment. Some of their comments included:

"Inside the nursery is safe and clean and a very happy environment but the area outside needs some work done." and "It would be nice to see the playground area tidied and cleared."

Since our last inspection changes had been made to how the service used the environment. Gaelic learners had moved to classroom next to the Gaelic learners in the primary school. The manager and principle teacher reported the positive impact on Gaelic immersion and transitions for all children as they provided an early level play-based approach to learning across Sgoil Araich and the infant school. As a result of this move toilet facilities were not as easily accessible for children. This issue had been identified by the manager prior to the move and authorisation for toilets to be made available closer to the playroom had been authorised by the local authority. This work had not yet been carried out. The provider needs to prioritise this work going ahead in order to improve outcomes for children. One parent who provided feedback commented "Children going to toilet half way up the school unattended at times is not suitable for children of that age to go so far."

Areas for improvement

1. To minimise the risk of infection spreading staff should ensure handwashing sinks are used solely for the purpose of handwashing, and dishes are stored and washed hygienically in another safe area.

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)

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3:1: Quality assurance and improvements are well led

The service was being well lead by a new but strong management team consisting on head teacher, principal teacher and two playleaders. The head teacher was experienced and was established in post. The principle teacher and playleaders, although experienced were new to their roles within the setting. They worked very well together and shared a vision for improvement and development of the service. Staff we spoke to told us that they felt supported and encouraged by the management team. They told us that they felt involved in the service and that the management team valued and respected their ideas and suggestions about improvement of the service.

The key areas for improvement highlighted within the service's improvement plan and self-evaluation exercises mirror improvements identified by the Care Inspectorate such as; improved planning and tracking of children's learning, improved outdoor learning experiences and learning and improved mealtime experiences. Although at the early stages of their improvement journey, we could see that the management team and staff were committed to improving the service.

A collaborative approach was beginning to support self-evaluation and improvement within the team. Changes to operating times and staff working hours meant that staff had protected time to plan and meet weekly as a team. Regular staff meetings and opportunities to reflect, allowed staff to come together, discuss practice and be involved in the identification of areas for improvement. Leadership roles had been identified which contributed to a whole team approach in driving positive changes and developments.

The service valued and understood the importance of partnership working. Daily conversations, newsletters and questionnaires provided opportunities for parents' views to be gathered and their evaluations used to support change. Most parents who shared feedback as part of inspection told us they felt well informed and supported, comments included "The staff would fully make me aware of any issues regarding child's abilities and/or things we could work on at home. Review plan twice a year - encouraged to chat in person, seesaw or email about anything that we feel needs met. Very transparent and appropriate." Other parents disagreed that they felt involved in their child's learning and development at the service. Comments included "There is no evidence for parents/guardians to look at their child's development. Although there is seesaw, we don't get to see their learning."

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The staff team provided a wide range of skills and experience to the service. Most parents commented very positively about the staff team. Some of their comments included:

"Staff all care about all the children in the setting. You can see that they all get on within the setting and the children are happy in their care."

"One thing I appreciate about the staff, is that when you ask something they will always find the answer if they do not know it."

On the day of our inspection both the Gaelic learners and Gaelic children were being cared for in one playroom to allow one of the team leaders to attend core training. As the service was not operating to full capacity this did not impact on the space available or the number of staff available to meet the individual needs of children.

The provider was currently advertising for a Gaelic speaking practitioner. We acknowledged the challenges of staff recruitment, particularly Gaelic speaking staff. Recent changes to operating hours and staff contracts have improved consistency in staffing. On the whole continuity of care for children was positive. The manager and playleaders were clear about keeping children at the heart of staff deployment.

The staff team communicated well with each other when a task took them away from their designated area or responsibilities. Staff shared key information to support meeting the individual care needs of children which contributed to a continuity of care for children.

Children were cared for by staff who had been recruited safely. Children experienced positive role models in the staff team. Staff interactions with each other, children and parents were respectful and friendly. These relationships ensured that children were confident in their environment, allowing them to have fun.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

To ensure that children experience high quality care and support the provider must by 31 May 2022, ensure that the main door to the premises is made safe and secure so no child whilst being independent can leave the premises unsupervised.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: "My environment is safe and secure." (HSCS 5.19) and "I can independently access the parts of the premises I use and the environment has been designed to promote this." (HSCS 5.11)

This is in accordance with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210 10. Fitness of premises.

This requirement was made on 11 July 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

The secure door entry system was in place and working effectively to keep children safe.

Met - within timescales

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

To support children's health and safety, the manager should ensure that a more robust system is in place to ensure that medication is being effectively monitored , audited and stored safely.

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 meets my needs and is right for me." HSCS 1.19 and
"Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective." HSCS 1.24

This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2022.

Action taken since then

Clear and robust systems were in place to manage medication.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's health and wellbeing whilst promoting enjoyment of healthy eating, the manager and staff should improve mealtime experiences. This should include improved systems to monitor the quality of experience children receive and how staff engage with children during mealtimes and improved routines so that all children are supervised and enjoy relaxed mealtimes.

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

"I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible." (HSCS 1.35)

This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2022.

Action taken since then

Although further developments were planned, meal time experiences for children had improved.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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