

Inshes Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Inshes Road
Inverness
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 August 2023

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2007144853

About the service

Inshes Primary School Nursery is operated by The Highland Council and is based in the grounds of Inshes Primary School, Inverness. Inshes Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 76 children aged from three years to primary school age.

The accommodation provided is within two main rooms with direct access to a spacious outdoor play area. The outdoor play area contains a range of loose parts and open ended resources which extend and enrich the children's imaginative play and learning experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection visit which took place on 29 and 30 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;
- reviewed email communication from parents and carers;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefited from warm and nurturing care from the staff team.
- Staff knew children well and had developed positive relationships with them.
- Children enjoyed a lovely calming mealtime experience
- Playrooms could be developed further to promote a more comfortable and homely feel.
- Nursery staff had developed positive and meaningful relationships with children and their families.
- The provider needs to ensure management time is managed effectively to improve outcomes for children and families
- Staff deployment requires improvement to ensure there is a sufficient number of staff working at all times to support the individual needs of children and the layout of the environment.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
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?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. Staff were proactive in supporting children with comfort and reassurance when needed which contributed to children feeling secure in their experience. Parents highlighted this as a strength of the service. They told us "all the staff are so friendly and helpful".

Children had fun and were happy and relaxed during their time in the service. We saw that they were confident around staff, and most had formed trusting relationships with them. Effective use of personal planning meant that children's current needs were identified and supported. This resulted in strong relationships between children and staff. However, due to competing demands placed on staff, there were some occasions when staff could not respond to individuals to consistently meet their needs at the right time.

Partnership working with parents, carers and other agencies supported information sharing, if children had additional needs, strategies and techniques were agreed, which supported their development. Regular communication and consultation meant personal plans were being routinely reviewed with parents and relevant agencies. Staff spoke confidently about children's individual care needs and what they did to support them. We saw staff responding throughout the day, offering kindness, reassurance and cuddles. As a result, individual children experienced care and support that was right for them.

Mealtimes had been a key area for improvement within the service. Snack was a positive, relaxing and sociable time for children. Children were fully involved in the preparation and delivery of snack. For example, children were supported to serve their own food and drinks and help prepare snack with the staff. This promoted children's independence and skills for life. The staff also worked hard to make changes to ensure lunchtime did not impact on children's play experiences. Children went down to the canteen at staggered times so they did not have to wait long periods and enjoyed more time playing with their peers before lunch. Consideration should be given to children serving their own plates from the canteen which will encourage some opportunities for independence. Staff engaged in conversations with children during their mealtime experience which encouraged language and communication skills.

Approaches to transition promoted children's security and wellbeing. This contributed to the development of supportive relationships to ensure children felt safe and secure during their time of transition.

If children required medication, we confirmed it was safely stored. Appropriate information was recorded which ensured it was administered in line with best practice guidance. Accident and incident records were completed fully by the staff and shared with parents in a timely manner.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and protected from harm. They could confidently tell us how they would respond if they had any child protection concerns. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and Learning

Children were engaged in exciting play opportunities within the nursery block play area inside and out. Good staff interactions supported children's language development with the use of positional language to placements of interesting items. Staff interactions extended children's vocabulary by using effective questioning to support children to progress with numeracy and problem solving skills.

Staff interacted well with children during play. Staff were developing opportunities for children to learn about literacy and numeracy through play based approaches. They used questioning techniques effectively to help children to think about what to do next to extend their play. They joined in play in a fun way and at children's level, for example, sitting on the floor with a few children in the hallway with some loose parts. Staff supported the children by talking about shapes, colours and numbers as part of the children's imaginative play. As a result, children were well supported to progress and achieve their potential

Staff understood quality interactions were at the heart of playful literacy development. Children freely accessed toys and resources to extend their play. During breakfast club, children had lots of opportunities for mark making and creativity. Children were painting, drawing and making calendars during their morning session. It was clear that the children were the heart of the service and staff had a lovely bond with the children. This contributed to them developing a sense of ownership and respect for their environment. There was lots of conversations and giggles between the staff and the children. This contributed to them developing a sense of ownership and supported them to be creative and develop their problem-solving skills.

Staff recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with good opportunities to be outside. Children told us that they enjoyed playing outside which promoted physical energetic play to keep them active and healthy. We saw some nice interactions between staff and children, with staff responsive to the individual needs of each child. For example, children were playing in the sand area and staff were supporting a child to problem solve and use counting with him to scoop sand in his bucket. This demonstrated an understanding of the importance of including numeracy in everyday play experiences

Children contributed to floorbooks which helped them to feel involved and included in their learning. Whilst children experienced a balance of planned and spontaneous opportunities, these were not always clearly recorded to demonstrate children's progress and achievements. Staff should develop the floorbooks to ensure learning from children's interests is consistently documented.

Planning approaches did not yet support depth and breadth in children's learning. Additionally, the quality of learning observations within children's learning journeys were inconsistent. They did not always detail the individual learning or skills that were being developed. This made it difficult to track children's progress and identify where additional support or challenge was needed. The service was aware of this and had identified this as an area for improvement.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience High Quality Facilities

Playrooms were clean, bright, and furnished with natural furniture which helped create calm and relaxing environments. Most were welcoming and inviting spaces and they all provided children with ample space to play. We saw children made good use of the space available and played happily independently or

cooperatively in groups which helped them to build positive relationships with their peers and develop their social skills. Staff told us there was further scope for the indoor environment and the aim was to look at more natural resources to enhance the provision and children's experiences.

Children were enabled to rest and relax as each playroom had cosy and nurturing areas which were well accessed by the children. This resulted in children seeking out a quiet space where they could have some individual time when needed and contributed to them feeling safe.

Children benefited from daily energetic play and had free-flow access to an enclosed outdoor space. We saw that children were capable and happy outdoors. They had great fun exploring the environment, and playing with their friends. Staff recognised the positive impact being outdoors had on children's wellbeing. Free flow access to the outdoor spaces enabled children to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. The garden provided a range of spaces for development of physical skills and exploration. They spoke of their plans to further develop the outdoor area by including a lot more looser parts, develop a planting area and get the children more involved on what they would like to have in their garden. There is currently ongoing discussions with management and staff around this and their main aim is to further enhance children's play and learning experiences .

Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. Staff understood the importance of keeping the setting clean and staff and children washed their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Nappy changing procedures were in line with current best practice guidance. This meant that children were protected from the potential spread of infection.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality Assurance and Improvement are Led Well

The head teacher and deputy worked collaboratively with the senior and staff members to use effective self-evaluation with a focus on improving outcomes for children. They demonstrated her awareness of the importance of self evaluation to support the delivery of high quality care and learning tailored towards children and families and will continue to encourage parents to contribute to improve the service.

Quality assurance processes had been developed to support the continuous improvement of the service. A quality assurance calendar was in place and had identified priorities to support developments. This included the deputy head teacher spending time in the playrooms observing staff individually, as well as working together as a team. Following this, the management decided to change the staff team around in each room to ensure there was a mixture of staff in each room. Although this was in the early stages we could see that there had been improvements of children's play and learning as a result of this. Staff worked well together in each room and children were happy and having fun. This ensured a consistent approach in meeting children's learning and wellbeing needs.

The management team understood the importance of effective communication with families using the service. This helped evidence how the service valued the opinion of families and encouraged their involvement in the life of the nursery. For example, management had introduced some questionnaires and 'you said, 'we did' to focus on the outdoor area. The management team took into account parental

feedback and shared their views on what their next steps will be to develop the outdoor area. This supported families to feel respected and their views and opinions to be taken into consideration.

We discussed with the manager the current nursery management time allocation and associated pressures for the depute head teacher managing nursery, out of school care and breakfast club within this allocation. In this context, we discussed the importance of building leadership capacity with the senior nursery practitioner and within each staff team to develop a culture of continuous improvement. The service now needs to take action to ensure their pace of change secures positive outcomes for children and their families

(See area for improvement 1).

Support and supervision systems had recently been introduced and new processes for staff appraisals were being developed. These provided opportunities for staff to meet with management to discuss their personal targets. However, not all of these had been completed for staff and it was still too early to assess the impact of these meetings on outcomes for children. The service should continue to ensure effective support and supervision meetings take place regularly.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure improved outcomes for children and families using the service, the provider should ensure the leadership team manage their time productively to undertake their role effectively.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a)(b) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/10).

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

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff Deployment

Children benefited from a caring staff team who knew the children really well. Although the current staff team had only been working together in the same room for a short time, we did observe some positive team working. They were warm and friendly, which promoted a happy and secure environment where children felt valued, loved and secure. Staff were welcoming and engaged in the inspection process. They were responsive to suggestions and showed a commitment to making improvements to support good outcomes for children.

We looked at the service's staff deployment and found that a previous area for improvement had not been fully met. Staff ratios were met and staff supported and supervised children to the best of their abilities. However, the layout of the environment outside and the individual needs of the children meant they could not always provide the level of supervision, care, and support they wanted to. Lack of adequate supervision also compromised children's safety. There were various blind spots in parts of the outdoor area, which staff

could not easily see from either the playrooms or the immediate outdoor area. It also did not take into account the complexity of individual children especially at busier times of the day. This resulted in some missed opportunities to support children to reach their potential. The manager agreed to consider how staff could be further supported to ensure all children experience high quality care and support. (See area for improvement 1).

Some staff had taken part in additional training provided by the management team. While some staff were appreciative of these opportunities some felt that that this was not always the case or have the allocated time to do so. We discussed this with the management team and were confident this would be taken into account.

Areas for improvement

1.
To ensure children are safe and receive high quality experiences at all times, the provider and manager should further review and make appropriate changes to staff deployment to improve experiences for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that:
'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.'
(HSCS 3.14).

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 ensure children are safe and receive high quality experiences at all times, the provider and manager should, as a minimum review and make appropriate changes to staff deployment to improve experiences for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that:
'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.'
(HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 8 February 2023.

Action taken since then

This has not been fully 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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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