

Woodpark Primary School Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

Priory Road
Lesmahagow
Lanark
ML11 0AA

Telephone: 01555 892 251

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 October 2023

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015385

About the service

Woodpark Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care to 69 children. Of those 69 children no more than 15 are aged two to under three years and no more than 54 are aged from aged 3 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school.

Care is provided from the nursery within Woodpark Primary School, Lesmahagow, South Lanarkshire. The service is close to local shops, schools, transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 and 11 October 2023 between 09:00 and 16:30. Feedback was provided on 12 October 2023. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with six people using the service and 28 families
- Spoke with 12 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with two visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children were happy, settled, secure and loved.
- Interactions were nurturing and responsive. Staff worked at children's level to improve their outcomes.
- Opportunities to play outdoors and experience learning in the local woodlands was helping to build children's curiosity and the chance to engage with nature and risky play.
- Monitoring of systems such as medication and accident audits needed to be further strengthened to ensure it was robust and contributed to keeping children safe.
- There were opportunities to further improve parental engagement and communication.

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?	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 quality indicator as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

A parent told us the service had "Friendly staff with lots of activities available to the children every day". Children received praise, reassurance and were loved. Relationships between children and staff were very nurturing and warm. Support was offered in a responsive way by a professional and sensitive staff team.

Staff strongly believed in respecting the rights of children. They were consulted as part of improvement projects at the service such as developing the outdoor area and establishing woodland adventures. A child told us "I'm playing outside in the rain" and another said "I like playing with the big blocks". Interactions were at children's level and natural. They were secure in their attachments and happy in play. This approach formed an important part of improving outcomes for children.

Staff were considerate and aware of children's interests and individual needs. A visiting professional told us "Staff are supportive of strategies shared and work to implement these with children". This approach ensured care and support for children was consistent.

All children had a personal plan in place which contained information to help meet their needs. These were reviewed regularly with parents and children. For example, there was a schedule of suggested dates when families could visit throughout the year to talk with their child's key worker about their progress and achievements.

Staff told us they had worked to develop mealtime experiences for children. Children experienced relaxed, calm and unhurried snack and lunches within the playrooms. A lot of consideration had been given to the location, process and importance of mealtimes for children. As part of this children were fully involved in the improvements made. There were opportunities to self-serve, pour drinks and cut food. We could see from action plans that the team were continually reflecting to ensure children's mealtimes were a rich opportunity for children to develop lifelong skills and for everyone to connect.

Additional support and staged intervention plans were in place for individual children where needed. The service was supported by visiting professionals such as speech and language, educational psychology and health visitors. A parent told us "Staff have been a great help when I have gone to them with regards to worries about my child. They work well with my child and keep me updated with my concerns and how things are going".

Visiting professionals told us "I have seen excellent examples of collaborative working with myself, and other professionals from a variety of disciplines", "The team invite myself and other professionals to attend regular meetings to discuss children who are showing signs of experiencing some challenges within the nursery and we work together to make plans to appropriately support these children and their families" and "Staff have considered all aspects of a child's wellbeing and educational needs as well as ensuring they maintain the child's dignity and respect the wishes of their parents". Support provided and strategies implemented were helping to improve outcomes for children.

Suitable rest and sleeping arrangements were in place for children. Spaces such as cosy corners, undercover outdoors areas and areas with soft furnishings indoors were available for children to relax and feel safe. This was supporting children's emotional wellbeing and sense of security in the service.

Medication for individual children was stored safely out of the reach of children. We talked with the management team about the importance of monitoring the management of medication. We discussed how this aligned with the quality assurance of the service in key question three below. Actions taken were contributing to keeping children healthy, safe and well.

Staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They participated in regular training and systems ensured they were confident in recognising and responding appropriately to any concerns.

1.3 Play and learning

A parent told us "Nursery has given my child new friends and made their confidence grow" and another said "We enjoy seeing our child grow and develop new skills that he is learning". Staff knew children well and could identify their needs and interests. Children's learning was being tracked and monitored. Staff referred to good practice guidance such as Realising the Ambition Being Me and Curriculum for Excellence to support positive play and learning.

A few families felt they were not meaningfully involved in their child's learning and development journey while others told us "My child's interests are always considered and the staff are knowledgeable" and "I enjoy that my child has the opportunity to engage in learning". Planning for learning had been a long term focus for the service. As part of this staff continued to work to adopt child centred approaches that supported progression. For example some intentional planning was underway and floor books had recently been introduced.

The staff team were in the process of reflecting and evaluating the success of this approach and how they could further involve families. We encouraged the management team to continue to support and guide staff to ensure learning was led by children and based on their interests and needs.

Indoor and outdoor play experiences were available throughout the day. Outdoor experiences on offer included large physical climbing and games, den building in the local woodlands and growing flowers and fruit. Trips to the local woodlands for adventure play and learning in nature were risk assessed, well led and supported by families who joined in with those outings.

Children had the opportunity to take part in a range of play experiences across all curricular areas and most staff supported children's interests well. For example, a follow up experience making large scale bubbles with bats and the chance to create their own bubble solution in buckets outdoors and a puppet show created by two children and watched by staff and a group of their peers. As part of this children enjoyed transporting resources from area to area to extend their own play.

We suggested that learning would be further enhanced by having more opportunities to develop depth in play. We could see that plans were underway as part of 2023/24 improvement planning to develop this with the team. This would ensure children were supported to reach their potential.

We did observe a few examples of developing children's thinking and imagination being applied skilfully in practice by staff. Continuing to reflect as a team and provide suitable provocations and opportunities would support high quality play and learning for children.

A focus on literacy in all areas was helping children's learning to progress. For example, children and families had taken part in taster Bookbug sessions, home links such as story sacks and a bedtime book lending library were available to families. A parent told us "There are always fun activities for the children" and another said "I really like parent stay and play sessions and woodlands walks".

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was spacious and bright. It was a homely environment with soft furnishings and materials that created a welcoming space where children felt secure. There were displays of children's art creations, photographs of their families and experiences. This gave a clear message to children that they mattered and belonged. We reminded the service to reflect on the location and purpose of displays and they agreed.

Indoor playrooms took account of children's interests and stage of development. Toys and materials were easily accessible for children in all rooms. An ongoing focus for the service was the importance of loose parts and block play. This was supporting children to make choices about their play and lead their own learning.

There was a wide variety of areas for children to explore. This included role play, stories, small world, information technology, loose parts and creative arts. Risk assessments were in place for all areas. A parent told us "My child is nurtured in a safe environment" and another said "The nursery is always clean and tidy".

Some safety measures protected children from harm. These included maintenance issues being addressed in a timely manner and a secure entry system. As part of a discussion with the manager about the importance of safety, we were satisfied that action had been taken to address a few issues, such as storage of nappy changing materials and loose wires before the inspection concluded.

The outdoor area had been a focus of the service improvement plan for 2022/23. As part of our observations and discussions with the manager we saw children were able to access free flow play to the outdoor area throughout the day. Staff had worked to bring a balanced approach of child led, spontaneous and planned experiences to life. For example, planting and growing, a mud kitchen and the development of a shed in which children could spend time exploring books, mark making and chatting with their peers. This was helping provide opportunities to spark learning.

Some infection control practices prevented the spread of infection. For example, handwashing was embedded for staff and children and areas within playrooms were kept clean and well-organised. However, more robust cleaning procedures were needed to promote a safe environment for children and families. For example, the organisation and cleaning of storage rooms and spaces out with the playrooms.

A wide variety of policies were available to families. These supported the management of the service and were informed by good practice guidance documents. Policies covered subjects such as safety, health, additional support needs, learning, wellbeing, staffing, transitions and complaints.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The service had identified parental partnerships as an ongoing area of focus for their 2023/24 improvement plan. Opportunities for staff to further connect and understand the needs and aspirations of children and families were planned. Staff were committed to partnership working. For example, stay and play sessions, a virtual lending library and parents taking part in woodland adventures had already been established.

Staff had regular opportunities to meet with the manager and received constructive feedback about their work. This was delivered in a sensitive manner with children's needs the focus of improvement conversations. The management team had plans to further involve staff using reflective tools and peer observation of practice to identify development needs.

Training was having a positive impact on children's experiences such as developing mindfulness and the development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) practices. Through discussions we reminded the management team of the importance of staff reflecting on and sharing the impact of training and how it had improved their practice and outcomes for children and they agreed.

Children and families' views were actively sought to support future plans and developments of the service. Suggestions and thoughts were gathered through questionnaires and requests for feedback following events held. Some parents told us they would like more "More communication with parents about what children are learning each day and more time to speak with staff" and another said, "Approaching management isn't a problem and they are very happy to put time out to listen".

We shared this feedback with the manager and suggested they reflect with families on available opportunities to share meaningful daily information and updates about individual children in the future. This would further support effective communication with families.

Quality assurance processes had contributed to positive outcomes for children. For example, improvements to mealtimes and outdoor play experiences. The management team were committed to their role. They had embraced new learning on how to make improvements within the service using small tests of change to ensure improvements were long lasting and impacting positively on outcomes for children.

Overall, action was taken to address gaps in practice. We discussed with the manager and they agreed that some monitoring needed to be further strengthened in areas such as accident audits and monitoring of medication documentation (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To improve outcomes for children, quality assurance systems should be strengthened to ensure they are robust and help to keep children safe. This includes but is not limited to the monitoring of medication and accident audits.

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

4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

Interactions with children were warm and nurturing. Staff listened to children, followed their needs and requests and offered reassurance when needed. This helped children feel loved and secure. A parent told us they felt staff "Have built great bonds with my children and show a great understanding of there needs".

Overall staff were well deployed across the day. There was a mixture of skills and experiences within the staff team. Participation in some training such as autism awareness, child protection and Bookbug storytelling had contributed to meeting children's needs. The manager told us they had an ongoing focus on staff training and we agreed this would support staff to share new learning and ensure consistency for children.

Experiences were positive for children across the whole day. For example, consistent approaches to outdoor play, minimal interruptions to play and improved lunchtime experiences were beginning to enhance experiences and build quality engagement.

Changes within the staff team meant that children had experienced changes to people who care for them. We acknowledged that this reflects the current staffing crisis within the social care sector of retaining and recruiting staff. However, staff had worked well over the last year to build relationships with each other and the children. This was supporting improved outcomes for children and the management of the service.

The induction process ensured new staff had a clear understanding of their roles and children's needs. The national induction resource was used as good practice to guide inductions and staff found this to be a supportive and detailed process.

Staff were resilient, warm, friendly and happy to be at work. They were committed to improving outcomes for all children. This had created a positive environment for children and their families.

People caring for children were safely recruited and registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. They are the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. They provide public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice and supporting the professional development of those registered with them.

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 manager and staff should risk assess the main door to the children's toilets to ensure it can be opened and closed safely by children. They should contact the local environmental health department for advice and refer to 'Space to Grow' guidance which contains detailed information on the nursery environment, toilets and the preparation of food.

This is to ensure that the playroom environment is in line with current infection prevention and control guidelines. 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 29 January 2018.

Action taken since then

A slow closure mechanism was fitted to the main door of the children's toilets. The toilet door was kept closed. Children were able to open and close the main door to the children's toilets safely. This area for improvement was addressed.

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	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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