

Blair Atholl Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

St. Adamnan Road
Bridge of Tilt
Pitlochry
PH18 5TB

Telephone: 01887 822 491

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 September 2023

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003016082

About the service

Blair Atholl Primary School Nursery is registered to provide care to a maximum of 20 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school. The service is provided by Perth and Kinross council.

The service operates from a playroom within Blair Atholl Primary School. Accommodation consists of playroom, toileting facilities and a large outdoor area. The nursery is close to local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 September 2023 between 09:30 and 15:15 and 29 September 2023 between 10:00 and 15:00. 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 children using the service
- received feedback from two families via our online questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children received warm and nurturing care from the staff team who knew them well. This supported children to feel respected and valued.
- Children enjoyed free flow play between inside and outside which supported their overall wellbeing.
- Effective use of floor books ensured children were listened to. Planning approaches ensured experiences were child led and responsive
- Children benefitted from a positive ethos of continuous improvement. Effective quality assurance processes allowed focussed and meaningful opportunities to support improvement.
- Regular team meetings enabled staff to take part in professional discussions, reflect as a team, and discuss children's learning.

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?	4 - 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?

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 quality key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches to support their well-being. Staff were proactive in supporting children with comfort and reassurance when needed which contributed to children feeling secure in their experience. Staff knew children well and were responsive to their individual needs. They were very good at following cues from children and were quick to recognise if a child needed support. This supported children to form attachments with staff and feel secure in their care.

Children's wellbeing and care needs were effectively supported. Staff worked with families, involving them in decisions about their child's care and development. Most children's personal plans reflected their needs, and were supporting children to be healthy, nurtured, included, and to achieve.

Children experienced a calm, unhurried and sociable lunch time. Staff joined children at lunch time, promoting meaningful conversations. This contributed to the sociable experience for children and allowed an opportunity for emerging language skills to be developed. Children happily engaged in conversation, reflecting on their day and nursery experiences. Children had opportunities to serve themselves and make choices about what they wanted to eat which provided them with opportunities to be responsible and independent.

1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun as they experienced high quality play and learning experiences. Open ended real life and natural objects were being used effectively to promote children's curiosity and imagination. Staff understood the value of these resources to enhance children's play and learning experiences, as a result children were engaged in their play experiences.

Numeracy and literacy were incorporated into most play areas within the nursery. Children had the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills and mathematical language in a variety of play experiences. Books were on offer throughout the nursery and real-life resources supported numeracy and literacy in the construction area. Story sharing and group times offered further fun experiences where numeracy, language and literacy were naturally embedded throughout the children's play and learning. As a result, children were happy, confident and were making progress.

Effective use of floor books ensured children were listened to. Planning approaches ensured experiences were child led and responsive. This empowered children to be leaders of their own learning. Children were given ownership of their play and encouraged to be independent. This contributed to children being fully engaged in their play and learning.

Children's ongoing learning and developmental progression was supported by sharing observations and next steps with parents via a digital platform. Observations detailed significant learning and next steps were relevant to individual children. As a result, children were effectively supported to learn and progress.

Children's play and learning was enhanced through strong connections to the wider community. Regular use of the local woodlands on Blair Castle estate, meant that planned Forest adventure days extended children's outdoor learning experiences. Children excitedly told us about these days, comments included, 'I don't climb high in the tree's because I have short legs', and 'I climb higher than the trees'. Parents comments included, 'Children are also involved in many activities like outdoor learning in castle woods and also are a part of outdoor events like Horse Trials'.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The premises offered a calm, warm and welcoming environment. It was clean, tidy and a well-maintained space that had plenty of natural light for children to play, learn and relax.

The nursery was welcoming and inviting for children and families. Children's artwork and photographs from home were displayed to ensure children felt valued and respected. Natural furnishings and resources provided a calming and nurturing environment for children to play and learn. Furniture was all an appropriate size to support the age and stage of development of children. The environment was well considered and supported quality play and learning experiences.

Children had access to resources that were clean, well-organised, and encouraged exploration, enquiry and fun. The continuous provision indoors and outdoors had been well considered to include age and stage appropriate resources, and interesting, open ended and natural resources. As a result, children were enabled to explore opportunities which promoted and challenged their curiosity and imagination. We observed children following their own interests within the play spaces and staff supported this well.

Staff recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with daily opportunities for free flow access between the indoor and outdoor nursery areas. This enabled children to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. The outdoor space was an interesting and exciting space for children and provided a range of play opportunities to extend learning, follow interests and be immersed in nature. Outdoors, children had access to a wealth of loose parts including, tyres, pallets, and sticks. Areas to climb, run and explore also provided opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills.

Staff were aware of the 'Keeping Children Safe - Look, Think, Act Campaign' to support awareness raising of potential risks in their setting. Staff used this knowledge to effectively engage with children to identify and manage risks. On the first day of inspection, one child told us how they risk assessed the garden area to keep everyone safe. This supported children to develop an awareness of safety and build self-confidence in identifying and managing risk.

To support the service to keep children safe, we highlighted areas that would benefit from additional security measures. For example, children accessed the outdoors via a push bar door. We discussed with the staff, manager and representative from the local authority ways in which the door could be alarmed to further minimise the risk of children leaving the premises unsupervised.

The toilet facilities did not support effective infection, prevention, and control practices. This had been recognised by the provider and service was preparing for upcoming refurbishment of the facilities. This would ensure that children experienced facilities that were well 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 quality key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children benefitted from a positive ethos of continuous improvement. The head teacher had a strong shared vision, aims and objectives that positively informed practice. Staff, families, and children had been involved in promoting a shared vision for the setting. This contributed to the strong relationship's families had with the service as they felt valued and respected.

Effective quality assurance processes allowed focussed and meaningful opportunities for the head teacher and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service. This meant that areas for improvement were identified, shared with staff and actions taken to make positive changes to children's experiences. This resulted in significant positive impacts on children's learning and experiences.

Strong leadership supported staff to develop their confidence and skills within their roles. Regular staff meetings supported staff to reflect together and self-evaluate the quality of care and support provided. There was a strong focus on improving outcomes for all children and their families, using relevant evidence and best practice guidance. As a result, children and families benefited from a culture of continuous improvement.

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 quality key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Children were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing. Staff provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play experiences. This resulted in children who felt respected within the service. Parents comments include, 'Love everything about the nursery, teachers are amazing with the children not only the children if you ever need someone to talk, they listen,' and 'it's absolutely amazing how much care and attention they are getting and staff are very friendly and helpful. They're ready to help with anything and always offer their time and advice'.

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that staff were meeting children's individual needs, consistently throughout the day. Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision and quality engagement with children. Communication between staff was respectful and created a warm and caring ethos in the service. Staff placed themselves thoughtfully during busier times to ensure all children's individual needs were well considered. As a result, children benefitted from a very calm nursery experience.

Positive working relationships had been formed between staff which meant they were all meaningfully contributing to the inclusive and positive ethos of trust and respect. The staff team worked collaboratively and supported each other well. Regular team meetings enabled staff to take part in professional discussions, reflect as a team, and discuss children's learning. The leadership ensured that staff were meaningfully included in this process. As a result, the staff team were involved in the development of the service, which contributed to the shared aspirations of the team. This meant that staff felt valued and empowered to grow professionally and provided children with a happy, secure, and supportive environment.

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?	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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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