

Ferryhill School Nursery Day Care of Children

Ferryhill Primary School
Caledonian Place
Aberdeen
AB11 6TT

Telephone: 01224 586 755

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 October 2023

Service provided by:
Aberdeen City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000349

Service no:
CS2003014426

About the service

Ferryhill School Nursery is provided by Aberdeen City Council and is registered to care for a maximum of 40 children at any one time between three years of age to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery operates sessions from Monday to Friday from 9am - 3pm during school term times only.

The nursery consists of a main playroom and a further playroom which is used for snack, lunch and quiet time. There is a dedicated outdoor play space for nursery children within the larger school playground.

The nursery is situated within the suburb of Ferryhill, a short walk from the centre of Aberdeen. It is accessible via public transport. On street pay and display parking is available. There are various green spaces and parks within the local area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 October 2023 from 09.30 - 16.30 and 12 October 2023 from 09.30 - 17.45. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. We carried out this inspection following two incidents whereby children had left the nursery unsupervised and accessed another area of the school. The parents and carers of these children had been informed at the time.

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 and their parents and carers
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs. The staff approach was very caring and nurturing which helped the children to feel safe and secure.
- Children benefitted from a variety of positive play and learning opportunities and were supported to lead their own play.
- Staff worked well together to ensure that children could access outdoor play throughout the day and they ensured this was done safely.
- Strong leadership had enabled the team to develop and make significant improvements to the service which impacted positively on children's wellbeing, play and learning.
- Children benefitted from a motivated and committed staff team who demonstrated high quality engagement with children throughout the sessions.

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?	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?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were supported by staff who were very caring and nurturing in their interactions and this helped them to feel safe and secure. Children's individual needs were responded to promptly by responsive staff, for example supporting children to resolve minor disagreements and giving them a hug or singing a song if they were upset. Parents and carers told us that they were very happy with how the staff supported their children. One parent told us, "the team at Ferryhill are amazing, we are lucky to have them!" and another that, "the staff team are all lovely and clearly enjoy working with the children. My child likes all the teachers and is happy to approach any of them."

Staff knew the children and their needs very well, knowing how best to support them to ensure positive outcomes. This information was captured in children's written personal plans which helped to ensure a consistent approach to meeting children's specific needs. Staff had worked closely with parents and carers to develop their child's personal plans to ensure that full and clear information was in place. We saw very good practice where children were supported using a child centred approach.

The team had been proactive in making links with other professionals including speech and language therapists, health visitors and educational psychologists. They worked in partnership to support children who needed an increased level of support. They team had been instrumental in ensuring that children and families were accessing the support they needed. They worked alongside families and provided guidance and advice where this would be helpful. The service was in the process of setting up a PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) group to support parents and carers to make the most of everyday learning opportunities such as playing, singing and reading stories together.

Children enjoyed a very positive lunchtime experience. A group of children enjoyed being helpers and this helped to develop their skills and confidence. They cut up fruit and set out the cups, plates and cutlery. Children self served their meal from a range of options all attractively presented. Small jugs had been purchased for supporting the children to pour their own drinks. All this helped the children to become more independent and also more engaged in trying different foods. Lunch time was a relaxed experience where children could take as long as they wanted to. Support was available from staff who sat with them and engaged the children in conversation.

Children had access to water throughout the day to ensure that they stayed adequately hydrated. They were in a good routine of taking responsibility for transporting their own water bottle when they went outdoors and returned indoors.

None of the children had a sleep whilst we were visiting the service. The quieter room however was available outwith lunch times for children to rest and sleep or to simply enjoy a more peaceful environment. Mattresses and blankets were available.

The nursery had recently started welcoming parents and carers back into the nursery on an informal everyday basis and had received positive feedback from families about this development.

1.3 Play and learning

There was a very strong focus on children's right to play, have fun and experience joy. Children were empowered to be fully involved in their play and we saw children making active choices which were supported and facilitated by staff. An example of this was children wanting to decorate the outdoor playhouse. Rolls of wallpaper had been provided and attached to the walls so that children could decorate the house. We saw a number of children very engaged in this activity. Another child wanted some playdoh and there was none available so they were supported by staff to make some more. This was also used as an opportunity to count, look at the instructions and discuss measurements, all of which helped support children's literacy and numeracy. Children were very confident in making their own playdoh which indicated that this was a regular activity. Staff took other regular opportunities throughout the day to support children with their literacy and numeracy, including reading books on a one to one or small group basis, looking at and exploring letters and numbers and discussion about temperatures, sizes and measuring when preparing lunch.

Staff work hard to ensure children could access outdoors all day, even though there was no direct access to outdoors. They enjoyed opportunities to use their imagination and be creative, for example scooping out pumpkins and using flesh and the seeds and some water and some autumn leaves to make pumpkin soup. Other children were engrossed in water play which supported both their fine and gross motor skills and this was a calming activity for them.

Children's learning, achievement and next steps to support further learning were recorded in interactive learning journals along with supporting photographs. These were accessible for parents and carers to read and comment on online. What we found was consistent with what staff told us about individual children and our own observations of how they were being assisted with their learning.

The service also had 'big books' where they documented some of the fun activities they had undertaken and the learning from it. Children had enjoyed baking and learned about weighing and measuring ingredients. A request for ice lollies led to the children making their own ones and learn about the freezing process.

Children were being encouraged and supported to care for their environment. When spillages occurred children were keen to mop up and when books were ripped they were very engaged in sticking pages back together. Children also cared for each other, for example some children poured drinks for other children.

Parents, carers and staff fed back that links within the community could be stronger. This has been recognised and is part of the nurseries current improvement plan.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where strengths had a positive effect on the outcomes for children and these outweighed areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was well furnished. Staff had worked hard to improve the environment. It had been repainted in neutral tones and the layout had been reviewed and changed. This had led to positive outcomes for the children as the environment was more calming and lighter and children had more space for play. More work could be undertaken to make the main playroom more homely and inviting, for example the use of soft

lighting, real plants and drapes. A cosier story corner and snuggle area could be created in the main playroom. The home corner could also be developed further to make it a more exciting and creative space.

The "lunch room" was a brighter and more welcoming space with much more natural light. One parent commented, "I think the area where the children hang their coats is the nicest area and that's not the area where they play and learn." Although staff did tell us that this room was well used when children were looking for some quieter time it could possibly be used more regularly throughout the day.

Resources were set up and displayed indoors to support children's play and learning. For example, there was a range of items within the craft area including junk modelling materials, such as cardboard boxes and tubes, feathers, pipe cleaners, pompoms, pencils, scissors, glue, coloured paper and paint. Children were confident in selecting what they wanted to use and were encouraged to be creative in how they used them.

The increased floor space in the main playroom had enabled the children to have more meaningful block play. The children had used the blocks to create a zoo and were really engaged in play with a variety of plastic animals. This had sparked some discussions about the animals with the staff member who was supporting them.

Children had access to a dedicated area of the school playground and were enjoying a range of play activities outdoors throughout the day. A parent had told us that they felt that "an outdoor area should be softer and more connected to nature and learning." We agreed that the outdoor area could be improved and noted that this was part of the services current improvement plan. Although it was a concrete area connections to nature could be created through the use of, for example, planters, small trees, grasses and bamboo.

We observed the environment to be safe and saw no obvious hazards. Unsafe behaviours were discussed and explored with the children to help support their awareness.

Significant work had been undertaken to learn from previous incidents whereby children had managed to enter the school unsupported or supervised by members of staff. This had included staff training, review of the environment, supporting children's awareness of keeping safe and building on staff communication and team working. We saw effective practice throughout the day committed to keeping children safe.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

There was a strong ethos of continuous improvement at all levels. Staff were reflective and regularly discussed how they could develop the service to further support positive outcomes for the children. Strong leadership was shown from the deputy head teacher and the senior early years practitioner who had high aspirations and led by example.

Self evaluation was taking place within the team on a regular basis. Staff were confident in identifying what was working well and what needed to be improved, and were very much focused on outcomes for children. This worked helped to inform the improvement plan. Feedback from families also informed the improvement plan, for example the need to extend community links.

An effective and detailed outcome focused improvement plan was in place for the nursery. We were able to see progress made in relation to areas identified for improvement and their impact. It was clear through discussions with the team, observations of practice and review of various documentation that a significant number of improvements had been made to the service. The environment had been improved, practice was much more child led and child centred and the lunch time experience had been developed to allow children much more autonomy and independence. The team were aware of the current improvement plan and their individual roles in driving this forward.

An improvement wall display was an effective visual within the nursery. It included a copy of the improvement plan, feedback about what the service were doing well and what they could improve and how they were going to get there. This helped to keep the team focused and on track and kept families updated on their progress.

The service was in the process of reviewing and updating the vision value and aims for the service and had been involving staff, parents and children feedback in this.

An environment improvement display within the nursery showed the significant improvements that has been achieved. Photos clearly illustrated the improvements and speech bubbles and voice recordings helped to show children's feedback.

An open day had taken place on the first day of the inspection and allowed opportunities for parents and carers to get more detailed information about the nursery and to provide feedback.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where strengths had a positive effect on the outcomes for children and these outweighed areas for improvement.

4.3 Staff deployment

The service was appropriately staffed at all times. The team was made up of skilled staff, who had different knowledge, skills and experiences. What each staff member could bring to the team was really valued. This helped to ensure a motivated and committed staff team who demonstrated high quality engagement with children throughout the day. Children therefore received consistent positive and meaningful play and learning experiences.

Staff breaks were well planned to minimise any impact on the children. The team recognised key times of the day where higher levels of supervision are required, including lunch, dropping off and collection of children and planned accordingly.

Where continuity was particularly important for individual children's needs this was managed carefully and effectively. This helped to support specific children who needed a more detailed plan to help them settle into nursery.

The team communicated well with each other to ensure that there was effective deployment of staff at all times. Walkie talkies were used to ensure that there was effective communication between the team working both indoors and outdoors to ensure that children could transition safely between the different play

spaces. We saw staff communicate clearly to each other when they were taking children indoors or outdoors and this was promptly recorded so that there was an up to date record of who was where at all times. Head counts took place regularly to ensure that all children were accounted for. Staff positioned themselves well so that they could see all areas inside and outdoors. This again supported them to keep children safe and also enabled individual needs to be responded to quickly.

The management team had worked hard to ensure continuity of care and support was provided to the children by using a small team of relief staff to cover sickness and other absences. Parent and carers had recently fed back that they were not always made aware of new staff starting at the service. The service had listened to this feedback and were in the process of adding key information about staff onto the online platform used by the nursery.

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

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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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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