

Letham Primary School Early Childhood Centre

Day Care of Children

Struan Road
Perth
PH1 2NL

Telephone: 01738 477 550

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 February 2023

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003046710

About the service

Letham Primary School Early Childhood Centre is a daycare for children provided by Perth and Kinross Council. The service is registered to provide care to 116 children aged two years to those not attending primary school.

The service operates from a purpose built facility, within Letham Primary School, Perth. Accommodation consists of one large play space, large cloakroom area, children's toileting facilities and a garden area. The nursery is close to local amenities and on a bus route.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 February 2023 between 09:00 and 16:00 and 21st February 2023 between 09:30 and 12:00. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed children using the service
- spoke with parents face to face and received feedback via email
- spoke with the staff and senior management team
- observed practice
- reviewed documents
- spoke with a visiting professional.

Key messages

- Children experienced genuine warmth, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing.
- Children had fun as they experienced high quality play and learning.
- Staff demonstrated a genuine interest in supporting play and interacted skilfully to support children's curiosities.
- Highly effective questioning provided opportunities to widen children's thinking skills and consolidate their learning through play experiences.
- Children benefitted from a service that was well resourced with natural and real resources to promote curiosity, inquiry, and creativity.
- Effective self-evaluation and reflection on practice enabled the senior leadership team and staff to clearly identify what was working well and what could be improved.
- Children were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing.
- Staff provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children throughout the inspection, demonstrating an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene to support children's wellbeing.

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?	5 - Very 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 genuine warmth, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. We observed staff to be compassionate and responsive in their interactions. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure and as a result all children were confident, happy and engaged in their play experiences.

Staff knew children very well and were responsive to their individual needs. Staff cuddled and comforted children to support transition and were quick to respond if a child became upset. Staff 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 enjoyed mealtimes. They were relaxed and unhurried, ensuring a positive sociable experience. Children were effectively supported to develop independence skills as they were able to self-serve some of their lunch and pour their own drinks. We noted that staff did not eat with the children during this time which could further enhance the experience. Familiar staff supported younger children over the lunch period. This contributed to the nurturing, calm experience. Staff recognised daily routines as an opportunity to promote close attachments with children using this opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations.

Staff were skilled at using strategies to support children's development. This included using symbols, pictures and Makaton that enabled children to make choices and access play. Staff were proactive in requesting additional support for children when required. They valued the importance of agencies working in partnership to support positive outcomes for children. One support agency commented: "There is an ethos of support and inclusion within the service".

Partnership working with families had been well established. Staff recognised the importance of engaging with children and their families at the earliest possible stage. Ongoing opportunities such as 'book bug', and 'eat well, play well' sessions provided meaningful experiences for families to engage in. This contributed to supporting the holistic needs of each child and their family to improve their wellbeing.

1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun as they experienced high quality play and learning. Staff demonstrated a genuine interest in supporting play as they valued the importance of children having fun. Staff interacted skilfully to support children's curiosities. This meant that interests were responded to in the moment as staff engaged with children to deepen the learning. Children experienced a range of high quality planned and spontaneous play opportunities which supported their development in language, literacy, and numeracy. As a result, children were happy, confident and were making progress.

Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. Children's voice was highly valued, and they were empowered to lead their play and learning. As a result, children were confident, happy, and motivated to learn. Highly effective questioning provided an abundance of opportunities to widen children's thinking skills and consolidate their learning through play experiences. For example, staff started off their questioning with 'I wonder...', prompting children to think about what they were doing and what could happen next. This supported children to achieve their full potential.

Children were supported to assess and manage risk during their play, for example, staff encouraged children to carry out daily risk assessment tasks in the outdoors area. As a result, children were developing an awareness of risk in their environment and how to minimise these in their play. We also observed staff engaging in meaningful discussions with children about the importance of being safe exploring the large boulders and it was evident this was embedded.

Planning approaches within the nursery were child centred and responsive to the children's interests. Children's words, pictures and ideas were captured within floor books which demonstrated their involvement in the planning process. Effective tracking of progress ensured that all children were supported on an individual basis. As a result, children were effectively supported to learn and progress.

The staff skills and knowledge of child development ensured that children were challenged, at all stages of their development, which supported continued progression and achievement in children's play and learning. Children who required additional support were provided with opportunities for one-to-one learning time, where strategies were used to develop speech and language skills through their play and learning.

How good is our setting?

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from a service that was safe and secure. This included a clear boundary fencing. Spaces were welcoming and nurturing for children and families. The main playroom was comfortable, well ventilated, and furnished to a high standard. Homely touches, natural resources and child centred displays helped children to feel welcomed and included. This created an ethos that children mattered.

The nursery environment was well-designed and provided a comfortable and stimulating space for children to play. We spoke with some children who told us how much they liked their nursery. One child told us "I have made a paper aeroplane" whilst another was proud when they helped tidy, "look what I have done, I done that". The environment enabled children to learn key skills through play and having fun.

Play spaces took account of children's stages of development and learning. Children's interests and curiosities were reflected in the environment which contained an extensive variety of high-quality provision that supported play. For example, tinker tables, curiosity corners, an enhanced block play provision and creation stations all provided rich play experiences. As a result, all children had fun and enjoyed their play throughout the day.

The two-year-old environment was nurturing, warm and inviting and provided a spacious environment for children to develop gross motor skills, develop curiosities and be creative. A welcoming sensory room provided a valuable space for small group activities, one to one sessions, and offered a safe and secure space for children to rest and sleep when required. High quality resources which were appropriate for the children's age and stage of development provided an array of learning opportunities to support play and learning.

Staff implemented infection, prevention and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. The playroom was bright, clean and ventilated throughout the day. Children were encouraged to wash hands frequently and at appropriate times. Established routines meant children were supported to be healthy.

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 improvements are led well

Children benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. Effective policies, procedures and quality assurance processes were in place to support the development and improvement of the service. This supported positive outcomes for children and their families.

A shared vision, values and aims had been developed in consultation with staff and families. This contributed to the positive ethos of the setting. The service valued opinions and involvement of children and their families. Regular feedback from families took place through a variety of methods such as face to face discussions, questionnaires and feedback requests. However, some parents commented that communication could be improved to ensure they are fully informed of their children's experience at nursery. We highlighted this to the management team who were keen to improve this as a matter of priority.

A realistic improvement plan was driving forward nursery developments. Priorities were outcome focussed with realistic targets. Staff were involved in reviewing and evaluating the improvement plan as part of their team development days. These opportunities ensured that everyone working in the service felt valued and listened to as part of the service's ongoing improvement work. This contributed to a positive team ethos and a sense of shared purpose and vision.

Effective self-evaluation and reflection on practice enabled the senior leadership team and staff to clearly identify what was working well and what could be improved. The service used a variety of documents to support this process, including Quality Framework, How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare and practice documents from the local authority. This resulted in staff who were confident to initiate change to improve outcomes for children and families.

Strong, inspiring leadership resulted in staff who had high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. There was a clear cycle of reflection and improvement within the service. The management team should continue to embed and sustain the high quality practices to ensure children and families continue to experience very good care and support.

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.

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff, consistently throughout the day. The staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs which enhanced children's experiences and ensured children had the right support at the right time. Children who required additional support were well supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. This was enhanced through effective working relationships with families.

Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. This created a positive environment for children and families. There was a mixture of skills and experience amongst the team and there was an ethos of respect and professionalism across the wider team. All staff had undertaken training that had developed their skills, and the induction and mentoring systems helped staff understand the service and their responsibilities. This contributed to the care and support of children.

The team worked in a very cohesive way, with very good communication at all times. We saw strong leadership at all levels and this supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. High quality play and learning was at the heart of the staff's work to support children.

Children benefitted from a service that valued their rights to play and have fun through quality interactions, positive relationships, and a high-quality provision. As a result, children, and families were happy at Letham Primary School Nursery and Early Childhood Centre.

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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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