

# Pathhead Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Pathhead Primary School  
Cairns Street West  
Kirkcaldy  
KY1 2JA

Telephone: 01592 583 450

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
20 March 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Fife Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2004005267

**Service no:**  
CS2003015883

## About the service

Pathhead Primary School Nursery is situated in a residential area of Kirkcaldy, close to local amenities including shops, woodlands and parks. They are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 74 children not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than 15 may be age 2 years.

The accommodation is provided from a purpose built extension to the school with its own access and outdoor play spaces. Children have access to two separate playrooms, children's bathrooms, a nappy change area and a large outdoor play area which is separated into two gardens for each age group for outdoor play and learning.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 March 2023 between 09:15 and 17:15. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with 15 children using the service
- spoke with/gathered feedback from 11 parents/carers
- spoke with management and staff members
- observed practice
- reviewed relevant documents.

## Key messages

- Calm, warm and nurturing interactions by staff contribute to children forming positive relationships and feeling secure.
- Children with additional support needs are supported effectively through continued review of needs and appropriate strategies and support.
- Children benefit from an inviting and well resourced indoor environment.
- Staff deployment is supportive of children's continued wellbeing.
- Support for families and opportunities for nursery engagement are enhancing children's outcomes.
- Quality assurance processes are contributing to positive changes such as rolling lunch time and ongoing development of the garden space.

## 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 which impacted positively on children's outcomes, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from warm, caring and nurturing interactions with staff who were consistently calm, gentle and respectful in their approaches. Children enjoyed cuddles when they needed this physical reassurance, supporting them to feel loved. Within the early entrants' room there was a strong focus on relationships and nurturing care, a soft start allowing parents to settle children with stories enabled children to feel secure. The welcoming and inclusive ethos contributed to children feeling relaxed and confident. Plans to re-start home visits should be progressed to enhance the transition experience and children's sense of security.

Children's emotional wellbeing was enhanced through access to calm/quiet spaces, emotion stations with relevant resources and opportunities to experience 'Reiki' sessions led by a staff member. Children told staff these sessions made them "feel like love". The opportunities for daily fresh air and exercise in the garden built their strength and coordination and contributed to building children's resilience.

Children were settled within the playrooms and confident in making choices about their play and learning. They moved around freely and accessed the outdoor area independently.

Staff knew each child well and were able to talk about them as individuals, promoting a personalised approach for children. They actively listened to children, getting down to their level and interacting in a sensitive way promoting children's self esteem and confidence.

Children with any additional support needs were recognised and supported effectively. Staff took account of their individual needs and took a respectful and dignified approach. The shared understanding of identified approaches and strategies to be used were readily available on staff lanyards, supporting consistency and promoting children's success. A coordinated approach and regular review of specific personal plans, along with links with other professionals, enabled effective planning to meet children's needs.

Staff worked closely with a range of other agencies and professionals such as a Cosy Kingdom and the Cottage to offer support to families contributing to positive outcomes for children.

Interruptions to children's play were minimised as they were able to make choices about joining groups such as 'book bug' when invited by staff. The new rolling lunch time experience also enhanced children's choice of when to eat. This gave children some control over the pace of their day. The new programme for rolling lunches should be kept under review and further developed to build in more opportunities to be independent in self serving main meals. This would increase opportunity for staff to further enhance the social aspect of eating together.

Children's welfare was promoted as staff were familiar with their roles and responsibilities concerning identification of signs of abuse and were following child protection procedures.

We asked the service to ensure that approaches taken to the recording of medication and medical plans is consistent for all children. Clear details about what an 'as and when' basis looks like would support staff confidence for the safe administration of medicines, ensuring children's continued wellbeing.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were empowered through a focus on promoting children's rights through regular consultation and participation. They had opportunity to share their views on a range of matters that affected them. For example, parents and children had voted on changing the names of playrooms, mind mapping about snack choices and reviewing nursery values. Children were able to recall their involvement as they invited us to look at the values wall display and told us "we have to be kind and share toys". This meant children's voice was reflected in provision.

Planning for children's learning was responsive and meeting their needs and interests. Children were able to discuss the learning wall, telling us "we're learning about wheat". During the inspection an interest in doctors was extended with supportive interactions from staff and provision of relevant resources which enhanced children's play and learning. Children's experiences and learning were clear across planning, floor books and learning journals enabling evidence of children's progress.

Children's journals were full and up to date, providing an overview of their learning which allowed them to revisit and build on prior experiences. The quality of observations was mostly effective in capturing children's learning, enabling the identification of meaningful next steps in collaboration with parents and children. In addition, an overview of children's progress was maintained to identify support needed in specific areas. These actions supported children's positive outcomes and success.

Children experienced a literacy rich environment as staff used the high five approach, sign along and evaluated the environment using the eLIPS (early language in play) tool. Book bug was also a regular feature supporting a love of stories. This promoted children's language skills.

Children's learning and development was enhanced through the family engagement opportunities provided. This included stay and play sessions, book bug, nursery walks and sharing Makaton signing through the see-saw app. Staff were keen to further develop these opportunities as they valued the family as a learning environment. This enabled families to be active participants in their child's learning, contributing to reduction of the attainment gap.

### How good is our setting?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided which impacted positively on children's outcomes, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children enjoyed a warm, homely and natural environment which contributed to them feeling secure. The creative use of second hand furniture supported a homely feeling and enriched children's play. For example, the use of mirrors which provided different perspectives and enabled children's self talk during play in different areas. The environment in both playrooms and corridors was beautiful, calm and inviting contributing to the positive ethos.

Children benefitted from spaces which had been created to support their positive wellbeing. For example; mirrors placed on the side of the shed outdoors beside flowers, promoted a quiet space where children could reflect, supporting emotional regulation.

Children were identifying with their local community as they enjoyed regular visits to Gallowtown community gardens where they enjoyed risky play experiences such as use of fire pits. Additionally, visits to the local woodland and shops enabled children's increased connection with others and the wider world. Opportunities for the older children to enjoy more frequent woodland and foreshore experiences should now be progressed.

Children's confidentiality was maintained as steps were taken to ensure the security of information held. This included the use of lockable storage units and password protected computers. Where information was required to be easily accessed such as allergy information, this was managed appropriately to support children's continued confidentiality.

Children's risk of cross infection was reduced through appropriate ventilation, regular cleaning throughout the day and promotion of handwashing. However, we asked the service to pay further attention to handwashing by staff to reduce the risk of cross infection and support children's continued wellbeing.

Children enjoyed access to their personal learning journals; however, the storage of these made it difficult for independent access to some of them. This should be reviewed to enable all children easy access to support their reflection on learning.

Although risk assessments had identified a number of generic risks, we were concerned about the potential risk presented by one piece of furniture. We asked the service to remove this item until it could be affixed to the wall to reduce the risk of injury to children. See area for improvement one.

## Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure that where large items of furniture pose a risk of injury, they are removed until they can be securely affixed to the wall to reduce the risk of injury to children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'my environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided which impacted positively on children's outcomes, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service was well led by a senior leadership team that had high aspirations for children and their families. Staff told us they were supported by them and felt confident to make suggestions for improvements. Staff had taken on individual areas of responsibility and understood their role in the development of the service and improving children's experiences and outcomes. For example, staff led in a variety of areas such as community access, sign-a-long, book bug, and the lending library.

Staff spoke confidently about their own professional development journey and how this supported outcomes for children. This showed staff were part of the service's commitment to continuous improvement and providing a high-quality service to enhance children's outcomes and wellbeing.

A focus on self-evaluation enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support to meet the changing needs of children and their families. Positive working relationships allowed staff to work well together as a team to reflect on their practice and opportunities available in the service. They used visits to other settings, best practice guidance and documents to identify where improvements could be made. This promoted rich experiences for children and enhanced their outcomes.

Effective quality assurance and monitoring systems ensured all children could benefit from a breadth of learning experiences available in the service. Children's learning journals were reviewed to ensure consistent recording of information and identify children's progress, and playroom observations monitored staff practice. This enabled areas of strength to be identified and supported professional discussions to highlight areas for development. The management team worked with the staff team to agree next steps and development goals. This approach showed learning through play and collaborative working were at the heart of improvement planning.

Parents told us they felt well informed of developments in the nursery and felt included by having frequent opportunities to provide feedback. For example, parents were asked to share their views through questionnaires, informal discussions, and had opportunities to leave suggestions in a comments box. Staff spoke with children to include them in area changes, including the garden development. They asked them what they liked about the garden and what they would like added. Staff, children and families had been included when they revisited the service visions, values, and aims. This helped the service to build trusting relationships with families and provide a service which met their needs, wishes and choices.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided which impacted positively on children's outcomes, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### 4.3 Staff deployment

Staff communication enabled children's freedom of movement between indoor and outdoor environments. Staff moved fluidly in response to where children wished to play to ensure appropriate supervision and support at all times. This enabled children to have influence over how they spent their time in nursery.

Parents were kept informed through verbal and written updates and a staff photo board and sign in board. This supported them to know who was looking after their child each day. We asked the service to consider how they could share information about supply staff members with parents and children to support communication for children's continuity of care. A permanent record of staff attendance should also be maintained to confirm staff ratios.

Children's needs were met due to appropriate staff ratios as a result of the management of staff shifts and breaks which were seamless. Additional staff were employed to cover the lunch time period. This ensured appropriate staffing to meet the needs of the children during busy times.

The deployment of staff at busy times such as collection of children was managed well. Staff were vigilant to supporting each other when parents needed to speak to staff who were managing the door. A doubled up approach to security at both internal and external doors limited the risk of children leaving unnoticed and staff were fully aware of the 'SIMOA' (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) campaign contributing to children remaining safe.

Key responsibilities were distributed across the whole team as each staff member held a leadership role. These recognised individual skills and interests, which staff recognised in each other and commented on positively; for example, leading on fundraising, health and safety and 'sign along'. This meant staff felt valued and experiences for children were enhanced due to the effective use of staff skills and knowledge.

New staff were able to discuss their induction, however, there was scope to improve this process. The service should make use of the 'National Induction Resource' to enable consistency of care for children.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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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