

St Aidan's Primary School Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

Coltness Road
Wishaw
ML2 7EY

Telephone: 01698 522 702

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 February 2024

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2010248661

About the service

St Aidan's Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 50 children aged two years to those not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than ten are under three years.

Care is provided from three playrooms in a self-contained wing in St Aidan's Primary School, which is located in Wishaw, North Lanarkshire. A foyer adjoins the two playrooms for older children, which contains the cloakroom, toilets and access to the outdoor area. Younger children are cared for in a separate room with its own access for parents/carers and to the school.

The service is situated close to shops, parks and other amenities.

The primary school and nursery class are both managed by the headteacher, who oversees the management, supervision and day to day running of the service. The principal teacher and two lead practitioners also form part of the management team.

The service is provided by North Lanarkshire Council.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 19 and 22 February 2024. One inspector 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 most of the children attending the service and spoke with one parent/carer during our visit. 18 parents/carers also responded to the Care Inspectorate's survey
- spoke with staff and the management team
- spoke with two visiting professionals
- observed practice
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They knew children and their families very well and worked closely with parents/carers and various professional agencies to ensure their needs were being met effectively.
- A variety of spontaneous and planned experiences supported children's learning in language, literacy and numeracy.
- Children benefitted from high quality play and learning experiences outdoors and local community facilities were used very well to extend their learning.
- Children's play spaces would benefit from regular monitoring, ensuring areas are well resourced to support children's comfort, play and learning experiences.
- Some areas of the nursery were tired and were in need of some attention.
- Strong leadership supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their abilities to support children and their families.

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

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|--|---------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | 4 - 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?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and support.

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

Children happily and enthusiastically entered the nursery and were warmly greeted by caring staff. They experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff. Children's emotional wellbeing was well supported by staff who supported them to understand their emotions. Children were provided cuddles and reassurance which ensured they felt secure, valued and loved. A parent/carer told us, "The staff are friendly and welcoming to my child and they show her affection at welcome time."

Staff had good knowledge of children's rights, which was reflected in their practice. The school and nursery had recently achieved a Rights Respecting Schools gold award.

Staff spoke about the importance of positive attachments and how their participation in using the Solihull approach and resilience training had strengthened their knowledge and understanding and reinforced the importance of building strong and trusting relationships with children and their parents/carers. A parent/carer confirmed, "The staff are really friendly and super supportive for us and our kid."

Children had the support they needed to enable them to progress in their learning and development. Their care needs were well understood by all staff and management. Staff spoke confidently about how they cared for individual children and about the importance of working closely with parents/carers. Personal plans provided a good overview of each child's care, learning and development. Parents/carers were involved in planning for their child and plans were reviewed regularly with them. The management team agreed to continue to develop children's plans to ensure they more clearly and consistently demonstrated how children were progressing in their learning and development. A parent/carer commented, "All the staff are knowledgeable about my child's needs and they communicate well with me about what activities she's been doing throughout her day at pick up."

Where children required additional support, staff worked very effectively with a range of partner agencies to support their development and identify next steps in their learning. Visiting professionals told us about the positive, collaborative working with staff and management.

Snack and meal times were mostly positive experiences for children. Meals and snacks were appetising, nutritious and healthy and children ate them well. Children told us their lunch was 'yumy' and that the pasta 'looked like caterpillars.' Staff were responsive when children requested more.

Younger children benefitted from having their snacks and meals in in their playroom. This was very well organised, and children were confident in their routine. Staff ate with children and engaged in conversation making this a very relaxed and sociable experience.

Snack time for older children was generally a sociable and unhurried experience where their independence was mostly promoted well. Staff had time to sit with children, model healthy eating behaviours and provide support when required. This ensured a pleasant experience was maintained and children were safe when eating. Children also had good opportunities to have snack outdoors and often took snacks and hot drinks

on outings. Staff and management recognised, and we agreed, that there was scope for meal times to be improved. The management team agreed to take this forward.

We found that medication could be managed more effectively. We acknowledged the swift action taken by staff to address some of the areas that were highlighted during our visit. Management agreed to continue to monitor how medication is managed in the service and ensure this reflects best practice guidance.

Children were safe and protected from harm. A child protection policy and procedure was in place. Staff attended child protection refresher training annually and had a clear understanding of their role. The management team understood their responsibilities and the systems that were in place to report any concerns.

A parent/carer commented, "We are happy with the care, play and learning experience that our child receives."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were happy and busy during their play and had lots of fun with staff and their friends. Children engaged enthusiastically in child-initiated activities both indoors and out and could mostly independently choose where they wanted to play.

Staff had a good understanding of how children learn through their play. Children were well supported to lead their play and most were engaged in the activities on offer. Staff had created a positive learning environment where children's play was valued and respected. Children benefitted from engaging in activities that involved mark making and using numbers in play situations. Sensory activities provided children with opportunities to learn and experiment using a variety of materials and staff used these experiences to develop their language skills.

Staff had accessed training in specific learning programmes to promote literacy, for example 'The Three Reads Approach' which promoted children reading for enjoyment and supported language development.

Management and staff recognised that additional high-quality resources were needed and a plan was in place to address this. We also found that staff needed to be mindful when planning areas and activities, to ensure children have access to the resources they need. Management and staff have agreed to continue to evaluate children's play opportunities. To ensure children continue to experience rich play opportunities, staff should continue to develop their skills in supporting children's play and ensure play experiences provide open-ended opportunities to explore, be curious and creative.

Outdoor play opportunities were particularly good and children could access the outdoor space in all weathers. Children benefitted from the wide range of loose parts materials available outdoors, which stimulated their creativity and imagination. Children enthusiastically described how they cared for worms in their wormery. They told us that they "need a blanket to make sure they are warm and they eat fruit." Staff spoke about how a 'Play on Peddles' programme had helped to develop children's skills in cycling. Children told us that they liked to play on the bikes and "go fast."

A key strength was the strong links that had been developed within the local community. Opportunities to visit local facilities including, libraries, shops and using public transport, enriched children's play and learning opportunities and enabled them to develop relationships and friendships with wider groups of people in the community. A parent/carer commented, "I like that she gets taken out on local outings often, having been to the pet shop, the park and local supermarket." Another told us, "I like that the children can

be brought on days out of the nursery to go and explore."

Staff recognised, celebrated, and shared children's achievements. Floor books and online learning journals were used to share children's progress and development with families. Effective systems were in place to track and monitor children's development, progress and achievements. A parent told us, "My child's keyworker always keeps me up to date with her learning journal."

Management and staff recognised the importance of parents/carers being involved in the life of the nursery and provided ways for them to engage with children's activities, for example stay and play and yoga sessions.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 2.2: High quality facilities.

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

Playrooms were spacious, bright play spaces with plenty natural light and ventilation. They were warm, inviting and comfortable with some homely touches, such as displays and materials in neutral colours. Soft furnishings helped to create a calm, nurturing space for children. Staff and management recognised that more nurturing, homely spaces for children to rest, relax and for self-regulation would be beneficial for children and some positive steps were taken during our visit to achieve this. A parent/carer told us, "Despite there being a high number of children within the setting it never feels overcrowded. Very homely environment."

Play areas had been generally well considered and took account of children's interests and stage of development. Areas offered sufficient space for children to play on their own and in small or larger groups with some spaces used flexibly to extend their activities. Management and staff should continue to evaluate the quality of play spaces, to ensure they meet children's needs and provide stimulation and challenge. We also suggested that consideration be given to developing a more communication friendly environment, which supports children to communicate their needs and wishes and help their understanding of routines.

Suitable security arrangements were in place to ensure children's safety. Staff ensured children were always accounted for and systems were in place to monitor their whereabouts.

Children had direct access to a spacious, stimulating outdoor learning space with school play areas and natural woodland spaces also accessible. This provided children with interesting, exciting spaces with different surfaces and resources to practise key skills.

We found some areas of the nursery were tired and in need of attention. We discussed this with the management team who took immediate action with the provider and staff to address some of these areas. Management confirmed that the provider was committed to addressing the remaining issues in the coming weeks (see area for improvement 1.)

While risk assessments were in place to support staff, we suggested this process could be more robust to ensure that issues similar to those that were highlighted during our visit are being identified and actioned.

We saw good hand hygiene practices were mainly carried out by children and staff. Children were mostly supported to do this well. To minimise the risk of spread of infection and support children to learn good hand hygiene habits, staff should continue to monitor handwashing.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's safety, health and wellbeing, the provider, manager and staff should ensure all areas of the setting are safe, well maintained and cleaned to a high standard.

This should include, but not be limited to, continuing with plans to:

- improve handwashing facilities across the setting
- ensure fixtures and fittings in children's toilets are of a suitable standard
- repair radiator covers.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led.

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

A clear shared vision, values and aims had been developed by management, staff, parents/carers and children. This helped create a respectful, happy and welcoming ethos where children and families were placed at the heart of the service. A parent/carer told us, "The leadership in the nursery is fantastic."

A culture of continuous improvement resulted in management and staff having a very good understanding the service's strengths and the improvements that were still needed to improve the overall quality of the service. This was supported by effective quality assurance systems and processes. We suggested ways in which monitoring processes could be more robust, which were welcomed by management.

Staff and management had worked hard to make some meaningful improvements to the setting which were having a positive impact on children and their families, for example family involvement, transitions and outdoor play experiences.

Key priorities were set out in the service's improvement plan with a clear plan of action in place. Strong leadership supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their abilities to support children and their families. Leadership was actively encouraged and supported at all levels and staff spoke passionately and enthusiastically about their lead roles. They were clear on the service aims, what had worked well and how this had improved outcomes for children and parent/carers.

Management valued staff and were committed to ensuring staff were happy, motivated and well supported. They were visible and played a key role in promoting good practice.

Staff had opportunities to meet as a team and peer assessment was well established. Staff told us that they felt their work was valued and that they received recognition for their hard work and achievements.

Management were supported by the local authority Quality Officer to make improvements to the service.

The service used some effective methods to communicate with parents/carers. This helped keep them up to date and helped them be involved in the life of the service. For example, sharing of newsletters, learning journals and consultations. Their views were welcomed, respected and encouraged. We agreed with the service's plan to strengthen engagement with parents/carers to ensure their views influence change.

A parent/carer commented, "St Aiden's Nursery is such a great nursery. I'm so pleased with the nurture and care my both sons have received over the years. The staff are fantastic and very helpful not just to the children but the parents also. I also love when the nursery takes the children out and about my son loves it. Thank you St Aiden's for all your hard work."

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff Deployment.

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

Staff engaged very well with us and were confident, open and professional in their discussions. They worked well as a team, communicated effectively and were courteous and supportive. A parent/carer commented, "Staff are always so friendly and there to help in any way."

Children and their families benefitted from the consistency of a well-established, kind, caring and very nurturing staff team who worked hard to create a positive, welcoming environment. We observed positive interactions with parents/carers when they arrived and departed the service. A parent/carer told us that they liked, "Friendly helpful staff, lovely environment."

Staff told us they loved their work and that they felt well supported by management and their colleagues. Staff had opportunities to meet as a team and were committed to their continued professional learning. Training and professional discussions had enabled them to reflect on practice, which led to positive outcomes for children. Staff embraced opportunities to work with staff members across the setting, wider school and other establishments to share views, ideas and learning from their working parties/leadership roles.

Effective use was made of the different experience, knowledge and skills of the staff team to ensure children's experiences throughout the day remained positive. We asked staff and management to continue to reflect on specific parts of the day to ensure interruption to children's play and learning is minimal.

A parent/carer commented, "My son seems to love his teachers and all other staff are friendly and greet him everyday."

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 | 4 - 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? | 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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