

Longside Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Longside Primary School
22 Inn Brae
Longside
Peterhead
AB42 4TP

Telephone: 01779 403 700

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 March 2024

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003015450

About the service

Longside Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of 28 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

Aberdeenshire Council provide the service. It is accommodated within Longside Primary School located on the outskirts of the Aberdeenshire village of Longside. The recently built school provides modern, purpose-built facilities for the nursery and direct access to an outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 and 6 March 2024 between the times of 09:00 and 16:30. 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, 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 using the service and two of their parents/carers
- reviewed six responses to our request for feedback from parents via MS Forms
- spoke with the manager and staff
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Strong attachments had been formed between the children and staff which supported children's confidence and wellbeing.
- Children were having fun and engaged in a variety of planned and spontaneous activities to which reflected their interests.
- Families and children were welcomed into the bright and airy entrance to the nursery, where there was plenty room to store children's jackets and belongings.
- Children and their families had opportunities to influence the direction of the service.
- Children were supported and cared for by a reflective and knowledgeable staff team.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing. There were good attachments between children and a staff team who knew them well. Children were confident in their interactions with staff and sought them out to show them things or request support.

Children benefitted from a consistent care as staff reflected families personal preferences and promoted children's privacy and dignity. This included interactions such as discreetly prompting children to visit the toilet or wipe their nose. When children needed support, this was given through caring interactions which supported children's independence. For example, children were given ample time to try and do things such as changing their shoes before staff offered support. These interactions promoted children's security and confidence. Parents told us they were very happy with the care provided to their child. One parent told us their child was very happy there while another commented that staff knew their child well.

Children's health was supported by the provision of healthy and appetising meals and snacks. There were opportunities for children to help in the preparation of snack, supporting their life skills. As lunch was prepared in school kitchen there were less opportunities for children to be involved. However, staff supported children to service themselves, help to set and clear the table and pour their own drinks.

Children enjoyed a relaxed and sociable time at mealtimes, with staff eating along with them. Staff recognised the opportunity to role model and promote attachment as well as skills such as language and communication. Children's safety was supported as staff were focused on them and able to respond promptly should an emergency such as choking occur. We discussed one instance where a child had returned to an empty table with their pudding. This meant that, while staff could see them, they had a less positive experience for the last part of their meal. The manager agreed to review the procedures to maximise the positive and safe experiences for all children throughout the mealtime.

Personal plans were in place and children benefitted as staff used the information in these to support their overall wellbeing. The information was reviewed regularly with parents which supported a consistency of approach and continuity of care. Children's health was supported as staff understood how to manage, store and administer required medications.

Staff worked with other agencies involved in children's care such as speech therapists to identify strategies based on individual needs. Information was shared and used consistently to promote positive outcomes for children.

Children's safety and wellbeing was supported through staff knowledge and understanding of factors which may impact on a child's wellbeing. Staff we spoke to showed a good understanding of their role in identifying, recording and referring any child protection concerns.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun and were engaged in their activities. They were able to lead their own play through a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences which promoted their choice and independence. Staff were responsive to children's interests and used knowledge of these to support children in the moment as well as inform planning for future activities. This included things such as making "clay", with the children accessing a range of resources to do this, and planting seeds around the scarecrow a child made in the garden.

Children's learning and development were promoted by the planning of activities which centred around children's interests and experiences. This included posting letters and asking parents to send letters or cards to the nursery or observing how the pumpkin used during Halloween broke down and reseeded.

Play experiences were supporting the development of children's skills in language literacy and numeracy. This included staff encouraging children's research skills using books and online resources as well as discussion about what they were seeing or doing. During our visit one child was supported to make their own book reflecting their experiences to take home. Another child was encouraged to count the seeds they were planting and consider how deep they needed to be in the soil. Children's access to real life resources such as measuring tools, supported by staff discussions, promoted their use of numerical language and counting. There were one or two areas where this could be improved such as using positional language with children in their active play and ensuring that resources were consistently available across the different zones of the room.

An online platform had recently been introduced to record children's experiences and share these with parents. Parents were engaging with this format and had given positive feedback. Observations of children's experiences were recorded and those we sampled had identified children's learning and achievements. A process for tracking children's progress and identifying any gaps had also been recently implemented. However, there had not been enough time to fully measure the impact of the new planning and observation system on children's learning. For example, where next steps had been identified to promote children's progression there had not yet been time to follow this up.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The entrance to the nursery was bright and airy, providing a welcoming space for children and their families. There was ample space for parents to chat to staff and for children to store their belongings. This supported children and families to feel valued. One parent told us, "All the staff at Longside nursery are fantastic, my child absolutely loves going. The facilities are great".

The playroom was warm and inviting for children. The Hygge approach, this embraces a cosy, calm environment, was being used to initiate changes and introduce more natural materials and resources. Recent changes to the layout of the room meant that it was now in zoned areas to ease children's choice in how they wanted to play.

At times the room appeared a little crowded, for example when there were resources on the floor or three or four children at the computer. The manager and staff were consistently reviewing the layout of the room and agreed to take these observations into account.

Children's independence was supported as they were able to access most of the resources. If they needed help in this, they were confident in asking staff. For example, one child wanted a particular wrapping paper and staff helped him to find this. The storage of resources in some areas also supported children's sorting skills. This included small baskets for different resources or shadows on the storage shelves for different shaped blocks.

Children's health was supported by the infection prevention and control measures in place. These included regular cleaning of surfaces and handwashing routines for staff and children.

Children's safety was supported by the risk assessments that had taken place. These were regularly reviewed and contained information which identified hazards, benefits and actions taken to minimise the risk presented. Staff's ongoing awareness of risk further supported children's safety, for example, clearing spaces so play could be extended safely. Interactions supported children to be aware of risk, for example, when balancing outside. We asked that the manager consider if it is appropriate for children to wear safety helmets when on scooters and include this in the risk assessment. It would further support children's awareness of risk and responsibility to include them in the assessment of risk when appropriate, such as when carrying out daily checks.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had recently consulted with staff and parents in reviewing their vision values and aims statements. This supported everyone to know what was important for the service to meet children's needs. Children's voice could also be seen within the action plan for this review. The statements were tied in with the whole school statements which supported feelings of inclusion and positive transitions.

Staff told us they felt supported by the nursery manager and the head teacher. This promoted their confidence to initiate change and share responsibility for taking change forward. Children and their families views were actively sought to inform the development of the service. This was done in a variety of ways, including open evenings, questionnaires and face to face chats. The manager ensured that feedback was given and that parents had opportunities to read and discuss the improvements in general as well as specific action plans. Parents commented that the manager and staff were approachable should they need to discuss anything or have questions.

The manager was relatively new in post and had initiated a system of quality assurance which was identifying areas for improvement. A comprehensive calendar of communication, audits and observations supported the manager in this. There were plans to delegate some of the roles by introducing staff champions for particular areas. This will ensure that the system remains manageable and supports future improvements.

Self-evaluation processes had also been implemented using national guidance. This supported the manager and staff to use reflection to identify further changes that would support positive outcomes for children and their families. For example, they had identified that it would be better if parents had more opportunity to come into the nursery, meet staff and see children at play. Various opportunities for this were implemented and feedback sought on parents' views of the impact.

To support improvements these processes had been used to inform an overall improvement plan which was broken into separate action plans. These contained the information to show how progress had been made with the improvements. It was also identified where these changes had led to further improvements such as more community involvement with the development of the garden. We asked the manager to ensure that there continued to be a clear focus on the impact of change on children's outcomes and experiences. Some evaluation of the impact of these changes had taken place. Time was needed for the processes to become fully embedded into practice and the full impact to be measured.

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 key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

Children's wellbeing was promoted as the manager and provider recognised the importance of ensuring the service was appropriately staffed. The staff team had a range of different skills, experience and knowledge. They each worked to their strengths within the team to promote positive and safe experiences for children. Overall staff worked well as a team and saw this as a strength of the service. They treated each other with respect and consideration promoting a relaxed, positive and happy atmosphere for children to enjoy. One parent commented that they "Cannot fault the team they are all fabulous with the children" while another said they were "Happy, friendly staff".

Children experienced positive transitions and a continuity of care as arrangements were in place to support this throughout the day. Staff were available to talk to parents at handover times and communication between staff meant that their breaks had minimal impact on children's experiences.

Families knew the staff looking after their child, maintaining positive relationships. Continuity of care for children was further supported by arrangements for planned or unplanned staff absences. This included using staff who knew and were known by the children to cover absences.

Children benefitted from positive interactions and support as staff were proactive in recognising where children may need this. Staff communicated well with each other when tasks took them away from the children, supporting those interactions to continue. Staff were flexible when additional activities or duties required changes to their routines. This provided reassurance for children and supported their resilience.

There were opportunities for staff to share their experiences and knowledge through regular staff meetings. Individual meetings with the manager supported staff to reflect on their practice and identify any areas where training was needed. This meant children were cared for by staff who were reflective and knowledgeable. There was mentoring within the team to support the development of staff knowledge and understanding. This was extended by meetings within the local school cluster widening the range of skills and knowledge to be shared.

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	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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