

Crown Primary Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

Crown Primary School
Kingsmills Road
Inverness
IV2 3JT

Telephone: 01463 233879

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 March 2024

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017195

About the service

Crown Primary Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 64 children at any one time aged three years to not yet attending primary school. The service is provided by the local authority and operates in term time only.

The nursery is attached to Crown Primary School, located in the centre of Inverness. Children are accommodated in a purpose built area, located within a church that borders the school grounds. They have access to a large playroom, canteen servery, toilets and an enclosed garden space which leads directly into the school playground.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 March 2024, between 8.30am and 4.45pm. Feedback was given on 8 March 2024. 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 eight children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from nine families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from warm and caring nurturing approaches, which supported them to feel safe and secure.
- Staff interactions supported children's developing literacy, language and communication skills.
- The environment was not well ventilated; as a result children and staff were not always comfortable.
- The management team were making good progress with identified improvement priorities, resulting in improved outcomes for children and their families.
- There was a good mix of skills, knowledge and understanding within the staff team, which contributed to positive experiences for children.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled and enjoyed their time at nursery. They experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. Staff recognised children as individuals and responded effectively to their needs and wishes which provided them with responsive care throughout most of the day. They communicated with children at their level in a quiet and sensitive way. These supportive interactions developed close bonds between staff and children, contributing to them feeling safe and secure.

Children experienced positive snack and lunchtime experiences which were relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Staff were aware of any dietary needs, which helped them to keep children safe. They were supported to become independent and learn new skills during their snack and lunchtime experience such as using and collecting their own plates, pouring drinks and loading the dishwasher after snack. Staff were focused on children, sitting with them which provided opportunities to promote close attachments and further develop language skills. Overall, mealtimes provided children with a positive learning experience.

Personal planning information was used effectively, supporting staff to meet children's individual wellbeing needs. Staff knew children very well and spoke knowledgeably about the support different children needed. One parent commented "The staff are always so welcoming and genuinely seem to know our child well and their needs". Parents were involved in regularly reviewing information held about their children. This meant that children received the care and support that was right for them, supporting them to meet their potential.

Staff had developed good working relationships with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists. They were confident in using strategies that had been put in place to support individual children, for example, supporting children with transition and with communication. Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of the potential impact on children of events happening in their wider lives. They were sensitive to family situations, supporting children and their families to build personal resilience.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun as they played. They were leading their own play for the majority of the time, choosing resources and areas to play in. A group of children were engaged in construction with building blocks for a long period of time, in a large open space in the playroom. Outside, some children were busy at the well-resourced mud kitchen in the garden area. Resources were easily accessible which supported children's choice and independence. Although there were limited real life items and loose parts available inside, children were making good use of large loose parts in the garden. This supported their gross motor development and their understanding of risk.

Some staff used skilled interactions to support and extend children's learning. Such as, discussing the space station which linked to children's current interests in nursery and at home. This supported children's developing curiosity. Most staff were skilled in supporting children's developing language and literacy skills. They introduced 'book of the week' and 'rhyme of the week' throughout the day, repeating words and labelling items in the story. One child was excited to retell the story of 'The three little pigs'. Other staff recalled children's play experiences from previous days, and referred to displays of children's work in the setting. This also contributed to children developing their language and communications skills.

Planning approaches were in the early stages of development. Staff were keen to have a balance of responsive and intentional planning to ensure that all children were progressing well, and developing a broad range of lifelong skills. They were developing their confidence in the use of floor books to record and extend children's learning. The management team had identified this as an area for continued development.

Children were excited to share their individual learning journals with each other, and the inspector. They were proud of their achievements, pointing to pictures and talking about what they had done. Some children had been confident enough to share their achievements with the wider school during assembly. Some parents told us they would like more information about their children's learning. The management team and staff were confident that a return to welcoming parents and carers back in to the setting would create more opportunities for information sharing.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

The setting felt clinical and functional, rather than welcoming for children. The playroom was lacking in attention to details such as homely touches and decoration. There was a wall of storage cupboards in the centre of the room, opening on to both sides of the playroom. This design feature of the setting was proving a challenge to staff in creating cosy and inviting spaces. We discussed possible solutions to this and ways in which the environment could be made more homely (see area for improvement 1).

We found that the setting's ventilation system was not effective in maintaining a comfortable temperature. On the day of inspection the playroom felt warm and uncomfortable. Staff told us they often felt too hot and that there was not enough fresh air in the playroom, and that children became very warm when playing. Windows were not designed to open, with some being stained glass windows of the main church. The manager had previously identified this as an issue to the provider, but no resolution had been found. Following this inspection, the provider agreed to address and investigate the effectiveness of the ventilation system. (see requirement 1).

The setting was clean and tidy. Staff followed appropriate infection prevention control measures when handling food, supporting children to effectively wash their hands before eating, and after toileting. This contributed to children and staff being protected from the possible spread of infection.

Staff worked well together to identify and removes risks within the setting, both inside and outside. They were alert to where children were, communicating clearly with other staff when children moved between areas, and when they arrived and left the setting. Staff supported children to manage their own risk when playing on large equipment in the garden, which meant children were supported to have fun and challenging experiences.

Children and families' personal information was stored securely in locked cabinets, in line with data protection requirements. Staff were able to access any relevant paperwork when they required it, without compromising the confidentiality of personal information.

Requirements

1. By 30 May 2024, to ensure the health and welfare of children and staff, the provider must, at a minimum:
 - a) maintain a comfortable temperature in the setting.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011

This is in order to be consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that:

'My environment has plenty of natural light and fresh air, and the lighting, ventilation and heating can be adjusted to meet my needs and wishes.' (HSCS 5.21).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all children experience an environment which is welcoming and homely, the management team and staff should review and improve the layout of the environment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'If I experience care and support in a group, I experience a homely environment and can use a comfortable area with soft furnishings to relax.' (HSCS 5.6).

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

The returning manager had high aspirations for the children, families and staff. They had created an early learning and childcare charter which had been shared with families, setting out the ethos of the setting. This supported everyone to have a joint understanding of what they could expect from the service.

Key areas for improvement had been identified by the management team, with a focus on positive relationships and positive interactions, supported by best practice guidance. The management team had developed an improvement agenda, with clear actions to be taken and realistic timescales. This was beginning to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were in the early stages of development. The manager told us that they had been concentrating on modelling good practice and skilled interactions, to support staff to develop their own skills. As a result, the manager had still to undertake planned, formal monitoring of some areas of practice. They were aware of the areas they needed to quality assure, to ensure inconsistencies and further areas of improvement were identified.

Staff told us they felt supported by the management team and were beginning to feel more confident in their skills, and their understanding of self-evaluation. Regular team meetings were supporting staff to be reflective, and to consider how they could contribute to improving children's experiences and outcomes.

The management team engaged well in discussion during the inspection, and were responsive to feedback. We found they were well placed to achieve their ongoing improvement priorities to ensure children and families continue to experience quality care, play and learning.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Children were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing. Staff provided individualised support by 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. This resulted in children who felt respected within the service. Staff had developed good relationships with families. Some parents' comments included "The staff are great" and "They are always friendly".

We found that the setting was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of children. There was a good mix of skills, knowledge and understanding within the staff team. They worked well together, communicating clearly when their attention was on a task, or they were moving about the setting. This contributed to effective supervision throughout the day.

However, on occasion, staff deployment and adult directed activities reduced the quality of children's experiences. Such as, when staff were taking their breaks after the children's lunch, or when it was close to the end of the day. Staff recognised these times as not always being positive experiences for children. The manager agreed to review staff deployment and routines with staff, to ensure children consistently benefit from high quality experiences, and their needs are met.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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