

Tynewater Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Pathhead
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 February 2024

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Service no:
CS2007157184

About the service

Tynewater Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 32 children aged from three years to not yet of an age to attend primary school.

The nursery is an integrated part of Tynewater Primary School in the town of Pathhead, Midlothian. The nursery premises consists of one playroom with direct access to a large outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday, 22 February 2024 between the hours of 9:00 and 16:15. 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 all the children using the service and two parents. We received written feedback from seven families.
- Spoke with the headteacher, depute headteacher, and all staff. We received written feedback from four staff.
- Observed practice and daily routines.
- Reviewed documents.

We gave feedback to management on Tuesday, 27 February 2024.

Key messages

- Children were happy and confident as they extended their interests and developed their own ideas in their play.
- The garden space had been developed and offered a variety of resourced spaces.
- Children were supported by staff who worked well together to promote a nurturing environment.
- Staff understood the importance of building relationships and working in partnership with children and families.
- Staff had worked hard to develop their self-evaluation processes, and these had contributed to bringing about positive changes.
- Management and staff had the capacity for driving forward improvements in the service.

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?	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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were kind and caring towards children, which created a welcoming and nurturing environment that promoted emotional wellbeing and development. Children showed kindness towards each other, and took on a supportive role, such as helping their friends to navigate the building of a den and chalk racetracks. Children were able to play and eat with their peers and siblings and bring toys and comforters from home. All of which promoted a sense of security, familiarity and comfort particularly during times of transition or change. One parent commented staff were "Lovely and nurturing people which gives me confidence that my child is safe and looked after well". Another parent told us "Overall, Tynewater nursery is a great setting for our child's development. We and our child are very happy here". One parent mentioned most staff provided excellent care for their child and "were well trained to meet all their needs".

All children had a personal plan in place, which took account of the wellbeing indicators and were completed and updated with parents. Staff knew children well and described how they met and supported their needs. Personal planning had been updated as and when changes to children's care needs had occurred. When asked a strength of the nursery, one staff member told us "Treating all children equally, with respect, dignity, providing good care and education".

Daily conversations and ongoing communication with families supported staff to understand individual children's needs. Well being and pastoral logs were kept. We suggested that the recording of strategies to support needs was streamlined for a more consistent and easy access process for all staff to refer to. This would further support staff to record progress and adapt their approach, as necessary.

Children were friendly and curious about the purpose of our visit. They showed familiarity with the daily routines, such as hand washing, snack and lunch times. Children gave us a tour of their playroom and garden, demonstrating their knowledge of the environment and a sense of belonging in the setting.

Children experienced warm, caring interactions while receiving personal care. Staff recognised children's feelings when they presented as a little upset. Staff were sensitive to this and responded in a nurturing and compassionate way. Staff used daily routines as an opportunity to have quality one to one interactions with children. This supported children's emotional security and overall wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were shown respect by staff as their ideas and suggestions were discussed, considered and taken forward. For example, mind mapping and floor books were used to gather and action children's thoughts and wishes. Staff encouraged and supported children to be independent and confident through choosing what they wanted to play with. One child told us "I like playing. I like friends and my teacher, I like the quiet room". Another told us "I don't like the metal bowls or cups, that's everything".

Most staff fostered a questioning approach to encourage and support children's play and learning experiences. This enabled them to have more challenging conversations with children to support their learning and development. Most children were supported to achieve their full potential, through positive interactions to sustain their play and extend their thinking. One parent told us "Although the staff are kind and friendly there is never much feedback on what they have actually been doing each day. There is very little communication". Management evidenced how this would be monitored with a view to improvement.

Most staff wrote meaningful observations that captured children's experiences and learning effectively. However, the next steps for development and learning were often generic and lacked detail. Staff should continue to develop more personalised and tailored approaches to next steps to further support children to reach their full potential. Staff shared observations of children's learning with parents through Seesaw learning journals. One parent told us they would like to see "More development in the play experiences, more inspiring play and more up to date and appealing resources for the children".

Numeracy and literacy were promoted with a good selection of resources available across the setting. Staff were beginning to make more use of signs, pictures, and numbers in play experiences. This demonstrated an understanding of the importance of including numeracy and literacy in everyday play. Staff told us "I think we could have more literacy and numeracy throughout the nursery and planning activities around this". The nursery had identified this as an area for development in their improvement planning.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a warm, welcoming environment that benefited from natural light and was well ventilated. Through consultations with management, staff were further developing the environment to enhance children's experiences and fun. Staff told us "We ask for children's input for how we could improve the nursery but feel we could potentially ask the families on how they feel we could improve the nursery". Staff had begun to develop play spaces that were inviting, thoughtful and sent the message to children that they mattered. For example, a cosy room had been created for children to relax in, read stories or one to one experiences. This supported children to feel valued, secure and important. One parent told us "Staff are lovely and my child is safe".

Children were able to choose where they spent their time and were freely moving between indoors and outdoors. The garden space offered a variety of spaces where children had choice of what and how they wanted to play. One parent shared with us "Small setting, teachers very welcoming to the children. Good space outside for children".

To ensure children's safety staff told us there would be two members of staff outdoors depending on the numbers of children using this large area. Staff told us they often went out for walks in the adjacent countryside and were planning to introduce more outdoor time in local woods. This would further encourage curiosity and an appreciation of nature.

The variety of natural open-ended materials indoors and out, supported children to follow their own curiosity and experiment with their own ideas. For example, children worked together to make stepping stones from loose parts materials and build dens. Children developed early literacy skills as they worked together to develop a plan, negotiated roles and delegated individual tasks. Children overcame challenges, problem solved and developed resilience as they worked together to achieve their goal. Staff recognised and praised children's hard work and achievements. This supported children to develop their confidence, gain a sense of achievement and satisfaction, while building strong relationships with their peers.

Management implemented infection prevention and control measures to safeguard the wellbeing of both children and staff. Good handwashing and infection control practices were conducted by most staff and children to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The head teacher, depute head teacher and senior practitioner engaged well throughout the inspection and showed a commitment to making improvements. As a result, all suggested actions had been reviewed and changes had been made prior to the inspection feedback. This included, nappy changing environment, reviewing children's water station, children's independence at snack times and streamlining paperwork.

Management had worked hard to build confidence and a shared understanding of good quality with the staff team. Regular team meetings and development of roles and responsibilities had begun to enable staff to take responsibility and be accountable for the quality of the setting.

Staff had worked hard to develop their self-evaluation processes, and these had contributed to bringing about positive changes within the learning environment. Staff recognised the need for continuous improvement to support positive outcomes for all children. Systems for auditing and monitoring were in place and had a positive impact on the quality of the setting. The Building the Picture quality assurance calendar evidenced who was responsible for monitoring and tracking activities. These included, observations of staff practice, monitoring the environment, snack and lunch times, progression pathways and parental engagement opportunities.

We saw a number of ways in which most staff used self-evaluation and reflective practice. For example, daily reflective discussions, floor books to plan and implement changes to spaces and experiences and in daily conversations. This helped to develop a staff team who were motivated to provide positive outcomes for children.

Staff told us management gave them confidence to make decisions on the way the nursery operated. For example, the development of the outdoor space. Staff were proud of their efforts and the positive impact this had on staff knowledge of individual children. Staff told us "Our leadership team is new from August 2023. This has been a positive change and I feel I am building working relationships with them both". Parents were welcomed into nursery and could join stay and play sessions with their child. One parent told us they would "like to see more use of the communication tools to let parents know what is going on". This would help to foster open communication, build trust and ensure a supportive environment to meet the needs of children and families".

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Parents spoke positively about the staff team. For example, one parent told us "Staff are very friendly, approachable and nurturing towards the children. They know the children extremely well and care really well for their physical, social and emotional needs".

Staff we spoke with and those who responded to our questionnaire gave positive feedback about working in the setting. One shared "Each member of staff use their strengths to support one another when we can" and we have "strong bonds with children and working relationships with families".

Most staff communicated well across the environment to ensure that they were all working together to best meet the needs of individual children. For example, staff moved between indoors and out in response to the number of children choosing to play outdoors. Staff informed each other and children as they were about to go on their breaks. This supported positive relationships and children were being reassured as to where key members of staff were and when they would return. When asked what they felt worked best in the setting, staff shared "I feel the majority of us are good at communicating with each other. We have a patience and caring nature and a good understanding of the needs and feelings of the children".

At this inspection we saw there was a balance of staff with differing experience, knowledge and skills working within the environment. Staff told us they were given sufficient time and support to understand what was expected of them. This contributed to children being cared for by staff who felt valued and supported. A variety of training had been undertaken and planned for which contributed to upskilling of staff.

Busier times of the day, such as mealtimes were recognised and planned for. Lunch time cover ensured there was always staff to meet children's needs. This arrangement not only ensured the safety and wellbeing of children at mealtimes but allowed staff to enjoy an uninterrupted lunch break, promoting their physical and mental wellbeing.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

Staff should develop personal plans for each child. These should be made in consultation with parents so that staff can track the level of care and support each child needs, including health and wellbeing.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 4 - Engaging with children and Standard 6 - Support and development.

This area for improvement was made on 30 November 2016.

Action taken since then

Personal plans were in place for every child. Progression pathways supported children's needs. There was evidence of parents being consulted.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Daily risk assessments should be carried out to ensure the outdoor play area is safe before children go outside to play.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2 - A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 30 November 2016.

Action taken since then

Risk management systems were in place ensuring the safety of children.

This area for improvement has been 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	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?	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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