

Newcastleton Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 March 2024

Service provided by:
Scottish Borders Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001976

Service no:
CS2003017376

About the service

Newcastleton Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 27 children aged from two years to not yet attending primary school at any one time of whom no more than five may be two years to under three years. The service is provided by Scottish Borders Council.

The nursery is located within Newcastleton Primary School. It consists of one playroom. A secure door entry system is in place and the service is well maintained throughout. There is also a secure and well resourced outdoor play area which could be accessed directly from the playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 13 March 2024 between the hours of 9:15 and 15:45. 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 we received written feedback from three parents
- spoke with three staff, head teacher and received written feedback from three staff
- observed practice and daily routines
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting teacher from Scottish Borders Council.

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 thoughtfully developed and offered a variety of well 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.

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 and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

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 put on outdoor clothing. Children were able to play and eat with their peers which promoted a sense of security, familiarity and comfort particularly during times of transition or change. One parent told us "Staff are friendly and welcoming and are prompt to update us with any information".

All children had a personal plan in place, which took account of the wellbeing indicators and children's needs and interests. Care plans contained detailed strategies that were agreed with parents. One parent told us that staff had worked really well with their child who had additional needs. Staff told us how they met children's needs, and they knew them well. Personal plans had been updated as and when changes to children's care needs had occurred. The recording of strategies further supported staff to record progress and adapt their approach as necessary. Daily conversations and ongoing communication with families supported staff to understand individual children's needs. We suggested chronologies could be streamlined to include medication administered and accidents.

Children were friendly and curious about the purpose of our visit. They showed familiarity with the daily routines and told us about recent developments, such the new playroom and garden. 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. They used daily routines such as snack and meal times as an opportunity to have quality one to one interactions with children. They supported children to develop independence and self help skills. For example, at rolling snack times children could choose when they wanted to eat and were able to self serve. This supported children's emotional security and overall wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

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 evidence children's thoughts and wishes. Planning was responsive, flexible and intentional which promoted children's curiosity, imagination and fun. Staff encouraged and supported children to be independent and confident through choosing how they wanted to play. For example, large empty boxes were brought into the playroom encouraging children to design their own play. They had fun playing hungry and noisy kittens. Parents shared with us "They explore topics of interest with the children and always do it in a fun and creative way. I feel relaxed knowing my child has a great time at nursery when I'm at work" and their child "Loves learning about dinosaurs and about around the world. For example, the statue of liberty, the tower of Pisa, and the Eiffel tower".

Staff fostered a questioning approach to encourage and support children's play and learning experiences. This enabled them to have more conversation with children to support their learning and development. Children were supported well to achieve their full potential, through positive interactions to sustain their play and extend their thinking. A very good variety of loose parts play materials were available for children both indoors and outdoors.

Staff wrote thoughtful observations that captured children's experiences and learning effectively. Staff reflected and recognised the detail to be included in written observations. Showbie, was now being used to share children's learning and parents told us they liked this. One parent told us "They do amazing work and I feel like my child has progressed well since starting ELC".

Children continued to be involved in adding to their paper jotters with art creations and work they wanted to keep. This empowered them to contribute their thoughts and experiences and encouraged a sense of ownership. This meant a more meaningful and holistic approach was fostered to children's learning.

Numeracy and literacy was 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 were receptive to suggestions of how literacy and numeracy could be further added outdoors, for example, mud kitchen recipe book and phone book.

Information and communication technology was on hold at present as they were waiting on systems to be put in place in the new playroom.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a warm, welcoming environment that benefited from natural light and was well ventilated. The nursery had recently moved into a new room with a large garden area. Parents shared with us "The coffee morning was amazing to see how settled the children are in the new class" and "The new ELC building is a fantastic space".

Staff had worked hard to develop play spaces that were inviting, thoughtful and sent the message to children that they mattered. Children were involved in planning their new room and chose where to put resources. This meant children had a sense of ownership of their new environment from an early stage. Children were supported to feel valued, secure and important.

Children were able to choose where they spent their time and were freely moving between indoors and outdoors. The garden space had recently been refurbished, thoughtfully developed and offered a variety of resourced and natural spaces. This included a small natural wooded area where children could learn about nature. The outdoor space was a still work in progress and there were plans in place to further encourage curiosity and an appreciation of nature.

Staff shared with us "We take every opportunity to use the beautiful countryside setting we are in and have excellent links throughout our community, taking part in community events". It was evident drainage in this area needed to be reviewed as the grass was sodden and waterlogged. This was being attended to.

The variety of natural open-ended materials indoors and outdoors, supported children to follow their own curiosity and experiment with their own ideas. For example, children worked together to make a "super big" muddy puddle. 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.

Children went to the school hall for their lunch. Most children appeared happy with the routine and were well supported. Staff were reviewing this to ensure lunch times met all children's needs. One parent told us "It's particularly nice that elc children spend lots of time in the main part of the school with the older children. This plays a huge part when transitioning into P1, I have no worries around my little one moving to P1 due to this".

Management implemented infection prevention and control measures to safeguard the wellbeing of both children and staff. Good handwashing practices were carried out by staff and children to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Cleaning rotas were maintained to uphold standards throughout the setting. Adult and child handwashing sinks had been installed in the playroom, promoting convenient access to proper handwashing facilities.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The head teacher and staff engaged well throughout the inspection and showed a commitment to continuous development and improvement. The head teacher visited the nursery daily. They knew children well and children knew them. Staff commented "We have an open door policy and talk to parents daily, over our messenger app and on social media. Parents are encouraged to feed back and comment on our ELC". This helped to foster open communication, build trust and ensure a supportive environment to meet the needs of children and families.

Whole team meetings, development of roles and responsibilities had begun to enable staff to take responsibility and be accountable for the quality of the setting. They had worked hard to develop their self-evaluation processes, and these had contributed to bringing about positive changes. We saw a number of ways in which staff used self-evaluation and reflective practice. For example, daily reflective discussions, floor books to plan and implement changes to spaces and experiences. 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 their playroom ran. They were proud of their efforts and the positive impact this had on staff knowledge of individual children.

Systems for auditing and monitoring were in place and had a positive impact on the quality of the setting. Moving forward, we suggested management and staff consider using the quality improvement tool cycle, Plan Do Study Act (PDSA). This would support them to test an idea by temporarily trialling a change and assessing its impact.

The nursery improvement plan detailed training undertaken and developmental priorities. These included, pedagogy pathways, digital, progress trackers and inclusion. Staff had started inviting parents into the setting again and play sessions and coffee mornings had been included.

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

Staff communicated well across the spaces 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 leave play areas. 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 "Very good relationships with the children and families", "Good working relationships with other professionals e.g. speech and language therapist", "Strong links with the community" and "Safe, caring environment, like home from home."

Parents spoke positively about the staff team. For example, they shared "they are friendly" and are a "great team". Staff we spoke with and those who responded to our questionnaire gave positive feedback about working in the nursery. One shared "We pride ourselves in getting it right for each child. There's no one size fits all model we know our children so well. As a team we are close and work very well together using each others gifts and strengths".

At this inspection we saw there was a balance of staff with differing experience, knowledge and skills working effectively within the playroom. Busier times of the day, such as mealtimes were recognised and planned for. This was changeover time for the part time practitioners. 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

A health and safety environment review should be undertaken and where hazards are identified these should be addressed. To achieve this they should include a review of the areas below against good practice guidance and legislation:

- Heating system
- Water temperatures
- Security of outdoor play spaces
- Changing areas

Required improvements should be undertaken considering the level of risk and works need to complete these.

This area for improvement was made on 9 November 2016.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the nursery had relocated to a newly refurbished playroom. Health and safety environmental reviews had taken place which ensured children's needs were being met and they were kept free from harm.

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?	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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