

Keiss Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Keiss Primary School
High Street
Keiss
Wick
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Telephone: 07555 127 821

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 March 2024

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017221

About the service

Keiss Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 16 children, aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. The service is operated by The Highland Council. The acting head teacher is the registered manager of the nursery. The service operates term time only.

Keiss Primary School Nursery is located within Keiss Primary School in Keiss, Caithness. It has its own separate entrance. The premises consists of a playroom, with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 and 6 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 children using the service
- reviewed online questionnaires from five parents and carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were caring, nurturing and committed to providing a positive experience for all children.
- Children experienced calm, unhurried and sociable mealtimes.
- The pace of the day was relaxed and supported children to have some periods of uninterrupted play.
- Staff supported children to communicate in a way that was right for them and at their own pace.
- There were no opportunities for free flow access between the indoor and outdoor play area.
- Leaders were motivated in their approach to ensuring the service was meeting the needs of children and their families.
- More robust quality assurance processes needed to be developed in relation to safeguarding procedures.

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 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

Most children were happy, settled and enjoyed their time at nursery. Overall they experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. Staff recognised children as individuals and they responded to their needs and wishes, most of the time. 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 positive relationships. However, due to competing demands placed on staff, there were occasions when they could not respond to individuals to consistently meet their needs at the right time.

Staff worked with families, involving them in decisions about their child's care and development. Most children's personal plans reflected their needs and were supporting children to be healthy, nurtured, included and to achieve. Staff worked proactively with other professionals, which supported them to identify strategies of support tailored to children's individual needs. Staff effectively used these strategies which supported children to achieve their potential.

Children experienced calm, unhurried and sociable mealtimes. Staff joined children at mealtimes, promoting meaningful conversations. This contributed to the sociable experience for children and allowed an opportunity for emerging language skills to be developed. Children happily engaged in conversation, reflecting on their day and nursery experiences. Children had opportunities to serve themselves and make choices about what they wanted to eat, which provided them with opportunities to be responsible and independent.

Children benefitted from their families being warmly welcomed back into the service. They were enabled to support their children to settle in and participate in stay and play sessions. Establishing good working relationship with parents was important to the staff. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time, as well as online updates. Most parents felt communication was effective.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The pace of the day was relaxed and supported children to have some periods of uninterrupted play. This enabled most children to explore, build friendships and move freely around the indoor playroom, supporting their overall wellbeing. However, on occasion children's play was interrupted, for example, before snack children were asked to tidy away play resources so they could access the table. This meant some children became disengaged and were wandering around the playroom.

Children's literacy skills were very well supported. They independently engaged in mark making and enjoyed reading stories with staff. Staff sang throughout the day which created a positive atmosphere and supported children's language development. Staff supported children to communicate in a way that was right for them and at their own pace. Children were supported using a wide range of strategies, such as the use of visual aids. Personalised strategies were effectively used to support children's individual communication development.

Children were offered good experiences to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning outside. For example, in the garden children enjoyed exploring in the mud kitchen, with real life resources. One child told us they were, "making cakes" another child told us they were, "making soup". This encouraged the development of gross motor skills and hand eye co-ordination.

Positive approaches to supporting risky and adventurous play were embedded within practice. We saw children being effectively supported to jump, climb and balance in the garden. This encouraged opportunities for children to assess and manage risk and build self-confidence.

Planning approaches did not yet support depth and breadth in all children's learning. Additionally, the quality of learning observations within children's learning journeys were inconsistent. They did not always detail the individual learning or skills that were being developed. This made it difficult to track children's progress and identify where additional support or challenge was needed.

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

Children benefitted from a play and learning environment indoors and outdoors that promoted opportunities to support their health and wellbeing.

The indoor playroom was decorated in neutral colours which promoted a natural, calm environment. This fostered a welcoming atmosphere for the children. The playroom was laid out in a manner which helped develop children's independence, resources were easily accessible to enable children to self-select resources of their choice. However, there were a number of tables in the room which were intrusive and limited where children could play.

Children had opportunities to rest and relax in safe, cosy areas. This enabled children to seek out a calm area where they could have some individual time if needed. This supported children's emotional wellbeing. Although the service had worked hard to develop cosy areas within the indoor environment, we noted further scope for improvement in relation to this. We asked them to continue to develop more homely touches within the indoor environment.

The building had direct access to an outdoor play area. However, there were no opportunities for free flow access between the indoor and outdoor play area. At times outdoor play was adult directed. This should be reviewed and actioned to ensure children have choice around their play and learning experiences.

Open ended real life and natural objects were being used effectively to promote children's curiosity and imagination outdoors. Staff understood the value of these resources for children's play and were able to model use to extend play and learning experiences. These experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. The use of real life resources could be further developed within the indoor environment.

Robust infection, prevention and control policies and procedures were in place. For example, we observed staff and children practice effective hand washing. The setting was visibly clean and resources were well maintained. This meant that children were playing and learning in a safe environment.

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

Leaders were motivated in their approach to ensuring the service was meeting the needs of children, families and the community. There was an ethos of improvement to support good quality outcomes for children and families. Staff, families and children had been involved in creating a shared vision for the setting. This supported effective partnership working where all stakeholders' views and contributions were valued and listened to.

The leadership team had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families. Overall good quality assurance processes allowed focussed and meaningful opportunities for the leadership team to review and monitor various aspects of the service. The improvement plan had identified priorities for development with clear actions on how these would be achieved. The service had amended the priorities for improvement to reflect the changing needs of the setting. This meant that the improvements were relevant and supported improving outcomes for children and their families. However, more robust quality assurance processes needed to be developed in relation to safeguarding to support wellbeing. **(See Area for improvement 1)**

Self-evaluation processes were evolving, supporting staff to reflect well together. They made good use of best practice documents, supporting the overall evaluation of key performance indicators. This contributed to some improvements to children's play, care and learning.

The leadership team were responsive to suggestions we made during the inspection, most of which had been identified through their own self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. 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.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children are kept safe and protected, the service should develop robust quality assurance processes in relation to safeguarding procedures.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

How good is our staff team?**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 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were caring, nurturing and committed to providing a positive experience for all children. They were warm and friendly in their approach which promoted a happy and inclusive environment where children could play and have fun. Parents commented:

"Staff are professional and approachable."

"My child adores the staff at nursery and I also think very highly of them!"

The staff team were stable and consistent, which ensured families knew who were supporting their children. Effective arrangements were in place to support staff vacancies. This supported the continuity of children's care and ensured children were supported by a staff team who knew the children well.

Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. This created a nurturing environment for children and families. Consideration had been given to the differing skill mix and experience of staff to ensure that children received good quality care and support.

Overall staff deployment was effective to meet the individual needs of the children. Staff were flexible and worked together to ensure children received relevant care and support. They communicated well with one another when a task took them away from their responsibilities. This ensured effective supervision and quality engagement. However, on occasions the staffing arrangements limited children's choice in play. For example, children were not provided with free flow access to the outdoor area as staffing levels did not support this.

We discussed with the manager the importance of continually reviewing the staffing arrangements within the service to take account of the routines and activities of the day. Consideration should be given to busier times of the day, the layout of the environment and the complexity of the needs of individual children. The manager told us that not all children who required additional support were present during the inspection. We advised the manager to assess each child's needs to ensure there is sufficient staff available to offer individualised care and support at all times.

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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