

Closeburn Nursery Day Care of Children

Closeburn Primary School
Closeburn
Thornhill
DG3 5HP

Telephone: 01848 331 240

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 March 2024

Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003501

Service no:
CS2003015477

About the service

Closeburn Nursery is a daycare service for children provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Head Teacher of Closeburn Primary School oversees the operation of the work of the nursery. The nursery is located in the rural village of Closeburn.

The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children aged two-years to those not yet attending primary school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 12 March 2024 from 09:30 to 16:30, and 14 March 2024 from 09:30 to 14:00. 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 several children using the service and gathered views from seven of their family representatives
- spoke with six staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Most children were happy, having fun and enjoying their time at nursery.
- Staff were enthusiastic about their role and proud to work at Closeburn Nursery.
- Staff and management engaged well in the inspection process and were open and honest during discussions.
- Staff and management should develop the play and learning environment to support and challenge children effectively.
- Quality assurance processes need to be embedded to secure sustained improvements across the service.
- The provider should address maintenance issues reported by the manager and highlighted within this report.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator 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 benefitted from warm and kind interactions from staff, they offered some reassurance and cuddles when children were upset. One parent told us, "Staff are approachable and caring and the teachers are amazing. They are always so happy and engaging." As a result, children were happy and settled in the service.

Children had recently been involved in developing the snack time experience. They were helping to prepare and serve snacks. Overall, mealtimes were unhurried and provided an opportunity for children to take part in a sociable experience with their friends and adults. For example, at lunch, they chatted about what they had been doing that morning at nursey. Staff encouraged children to try new foods. As a result, children were developing healthy eating habits.

Some children who required extra support with feeding received support that reflected their individual needs. Objects of reference and visual aids were used as a tool to communicate at these times. This meant that children were benefitting from the warm, caring relationships they had built with some of the staff team.

However, there were some improvements that could be made to the lunchtime experience. We suggested that children could be more independent and involved in the lunchtime service. We discussed this with staff and they told us about further plans they had to improve mealtimes, for example, involving the children in setting the table and serving food. This will allow all children across the nursery to experience positive mealtimes and to be supported to develop their independence.

All children had a personal plan in place which included their likes, dislikes and preferences. Personal plans included some valuable information regarding children's individual needs. However, children's personal plans were not always reviewed noting the progress made or included how they would be supported whilst in the service. The manager should now ensure that personal plans are regularly reviewed and updated with the most current targets, support strategies and next steps.

On the first day of inspection, we sampled medication records and found that there was no policy available. The storage of medication was not in line with current guidance and best practice. By the end of the inspection, we were provided with a policy and steps had been taken to store medication appropriately. The manager should continue to audit all medication held to ensure it is in line with the current best practice guidance 'Management of Medication in Day care and Childminding Services.'

Children had the opportunity to sleep when required. Staff knew children's sleep preferences and were responsive to ever changing routines. Sleep routines also respected families' wishes. This supported children's overall wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We evaluated this quality indicator as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact on outcomes for children, key areas needed to improve.

Overall, children were mostly happy, having fun and enjoying their time at nursery. Children were able to move freely around the playroom. Children particularly enjoyed mark making, the climbing platform and playing in the 'salon.' This meant that there were opportunities for children to choose during free play and develop a range of physical and social skills.

Literacy development was a focus for the setting. During our visit a parent was in the centre to support the CAPER (children and parents enjoy reading) home link project. Children select a book to take home to enjoy with their families and most children had completed a book review drawing pictures of their favourite parts of the stories. A member of staff was also delivering a Bookbug session. These sessions supported language skills through songs and rhymes. This meant that children were developing early literacy skills.

Overall, staff had a good understanding of child development across the setting. Some staff engaged well to support children at a level that was right for them. For example, time was given to allow children to be independent when dressing for outdoors. However, on several occasions we observed children that were not being sufficiently stimulated or challenged. Experiences on offer were not always developmentally appropriate and some spaces were poorly resourced. Some two-year-olds found it difficult to find activities that matched their age, stage and level of development. We would encourage the manager and staff to take account of children's developmental stage when planning experiences for children. This will further ensure that all children are supported to reach their potential. **(See area for improvement 1)**

Although there were systems and processes in place to support the recording, planning and evaluating of experiences, these were not always used to support the overall learning and development of all children. Focus should now be on staff recording high quality observations, and next steps for learning should be tracked and updated when they are reached. This information should be shared with parents regularly. This would add value to the children's experience and ensure they are fully supported and challenged. This was an area for improvement following a complaint investigation, which has not been met, and will be repeated. **(See area for improvement 2)**

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure that information recorded about children is meaningful, used to support their wellbeing, learning and development, and is communicated effectively with parents and caregivers.

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

'My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected' (HSCS 1.23)

and

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

2. To support children's play and learning, management and staff should look at creating an environment that inspires children's imagination, curiosity and creativity. Also providing children with more developmentally appropriate opportunities to discover, explore, experiment and problem solve.

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

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27)

and

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact on outcomes for children, key areas needed to improve.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were supported in a playroom which had ample space for them to play together or on their own if they wished. Children had space to sleep within the playroom and there was plenty of natural light and ventilation. This supported children's wellbeing.

Children enjoyed being outdoors. They were having fun on balance bikes and some children were exploring potatoes and how they grow. However, due to the deployment of staff, there was no free flow access to outdoors and there were parts of the day when outdoor play was not available. The provider, manager and staff should work together to develop the quality of outdoor play experiences. This will allow children to access outdoor play and will have a positive impact on their play, learning and overall wellbeing. **(See area for improvement 1)**

Staff and children washed their hands before mealtimes. We would encourage children and staff to wash their hands at other key points of the day, including when they come in from outdoors. This will help to stop the spread of infection and ensure children and staff are kept safe and healthy.

Maintenance work was due to be carried out in several areas throughout the setting. Black mould was present on the window frames and sills, and some areas of the nursery were visibly dirty. One parent told us, "Needs better heating and more modern building." We would ask the provider to continue with any maintenance work and carry out immediate cleaning to enhance the spaces available to children. Particular attention should be given to the windows, windowsills, blinds, radiators and walls. This will further enhance the quality of the environment and stop the spread of infection. **(See area for improvement 2)**

Risk assessments were in place throughout the service. However, we highlighted a potential risk to children being able to climb on a container outside that was placed near a wall. By the end of the inspection this had been moved. We discussed Care Inspectorate's 'SIMOA' campaign with staff which encourages services to act responsibly to safeguard, protect and support children's wellbeing. We would encourage the manager to review risk assessments with all staff to always ensure the safety of children.

Areas for improvement

1.

To support children's health, wellbeing and choice, the manager should develop arrangements to ensure all children can choose when they access outdoors. This should include a focus on a safe area to play with more exciting and challenging outdoor play experiences.

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

'As a child. I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

2.

To protect children's health, wellbeing and safety needs, the provider should ensure children are cared for in a safe and hygienic environment by carrying out appropriate maintenance, repairs and cleaning.

This should include, but not be limited to:

- window frames;
- window sills;
- blinds; and
- holes in the walls.

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

'My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells' (HSCS 5.18)

and

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact on outcomes for children, key areas needed to improve.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We found the management team engaged well during the inspection process. We acknowledge there have been several challenges facing the service over the past year, including staff recruitment.

The service is in the early stages of supporting staff with leadership and champion roles, for example, one member of staff had started to deliver Bookbug sessions. This style of leadership can support staff's individual strengths and contribute to improved experiences for children. Therefore, we would encourage this approach to be expanded throughout the staff team.

Parents were kept informed through newsletters. The use of Class Dojo had recently been withdrawn and the manager was looking for a replacement to allow for more immediate communication. On the first day of inspection, the parents held their first parent' forum. This allowed parents to share ideas to improve the service. These were shared with the manager who is keen to progress with these suggestions and we would encourage them to do so. This allowed parents to feel part of the life of the setting.

The service had a quality assurance calendar and improvement plan in place. However, these processes were not yet regular or robust enough to ensure procedures were consistently followed to secure sustained improvement. Robust monitoring systems, including self-evaluation, need to be more firmly embedded with a focus on monitoring children's personal plans, children's experiences, monitoring of staff practice, and monitoring medication and health care plans. This will ensure that improvements are sustained and children continually benefit from a service that improves. **(See area for improvement 1)**

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the provider should implement robust quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation covering key areas of practice. This should include, but not be limited to, children's personal plans, children's play and learning experiences, staff practice, and monitoring of medication.

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

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19)

and

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact on outcomes for children, key areas needed to improve.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff we spoke to were enthusiastic about their role and proud to work at Closeburn Nursery. They valued the positive relationships that they had developed with children and their families. Staff worked well together to create a positive and welcoming environment by being kind and caring in their interactions with the children.

Staff told us that they have faced several challenges over the past year which has had an impact on their wellbeing. We discussed with the manager the supports that had been put in place. We would encourage the provider and manager to continue to offer this support which should include regular one-to-one meetings with their manager. This will support staff health and wellbeing, and will further allow them to provide high quality care for children.

We found the approach to staffing within the service was not outcome focused. Continuity of care across the session was variable impacting on the quality of outcomes and experiences for children and staff morale. On the day of inspection, the manager was working directly with the children to maintain the required adult to child ratios for some parts of the day. Throughout the day, staff did not position themselves appropriately in the room and did not respond appropriately to children who required support. This led to children being disengaged in their play, and children were not always supported or challenged in the right way.

While the service was working within the recommended adult to child ratios, staffing levels were not always effective in ensuring high quality outcomes for all children. Staffing levels should be reflected upon to ensure children's needs are consistently met, including how staff would support children in managing their emotions, identifying triggers, and de-escalation techniques. This would result in staff being more present with the children and able to effectively observe, promote quality interactions with all children and keep children safe. **(See area for improvement 1)**

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure positive outcomes for children, management should monitor and review the deployment and positioning of staff with a focus on staff responsibilities, engagement and effective supervision.

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

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15)

and

'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

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

The provider should ensure that information recorded about children is meaningful, used to support their wellbeing, learning and development, and is communicated effectively with parents and caregivers.

This area for improvement was made on 22 July 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff knew children well and used this knowledge to support some aspects of their wellbeing, for example, toileting and feeding habits. However, information related to children's learning and development was not always effectively communicated with parents. **Therefore, this area for improvement has not been met, and has been repeated.**

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate

How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate

How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate

How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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