

Patna Early Childhood Centre Day Care of Children

Whitehill Avenue
Patna
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Telephone: 01292 531 271

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 March 2024

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2003015816

About the service

Patna Early Childhood Centre is a day care for children service. The service is registered for a maximum of 42 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 42 are aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school full time with no more than 5 aged 2 to under 3. It is part of Patna Primary School, in the village of Patna in East Ayrshire.

Children have access to a playroom and their own secure outdoor space. Children can freely move indoors and outdoors. The centre is located in a semi-rural village and is within walking distance of local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate, on Tuesday, 26 March 2024, between 09:15 and 16:30 and Tuesday, 28 March 2024, between 09:15 and 14:00.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed practice and daily life;
- spoke with six children using the service;
- reviewed documents;
- spoke with the head teacher and eight staff; and
- emailed nine parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

Children were happy, secure and had formed positive relationships with staff and management.

Personal plans documented key information about children's health, welfare, and safety needs and were being monitored by management and staff on a regular basis.

Staff and management have worked hard in developing the outdoors areas of the nursery.

Quality assurance processes had been developed to support continuous improvement.

There was a positive staff ethos and staff worked well together through effective communication and supporting each other through respectful interactions.

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

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| How good is our care, play and learning? | 5 - Very Good |
| How good is our setting? | 4 - Good |
| How good is our leadership? | 4 - 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.

Throughout the inspection, children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches. This supported children to be secure, happy, settled, and confident through having developed positive relationships with staff. Children approached staff for cuddles and invited staff to take part in their play and learning. A child told us "My teachers are really nice and like to help and play with me and laugh with me and my nursery is fun, and I love to learn and play with my friends." Parents told us: "I do not have a bad word to say, the staff are amazing, the classroom is very clean and tidy. All my child's needs, learning etc is spot on my child was welcomed with open arms and the staff made sure my child felt safe, happy, and looked after while in their care." And "Friendly centre, always focused on the children and finding new ways for learning, making sure they are safe and having fun. My child is thriving at the ECC."

Lunchtime was in two sittings; staff supported children with lunch, and others supported the children who were still playing. Children were actively involved throughout. Lunchtime helpers were observed setting up alongside staff, taking responsibility, and developing life skills. Staff have reflected on the lunch experience, which resulted in children being unhurried and having a relaxed atmosphere. Staff ate alongside children, supporting individuals and ensuring children received a caring and positive social experience. Children were encouraged to self-serve, supported to pour drinks, and cleared away after eating. Children were relaxed and enjoyed the food that was provided. After eating, children were free to access the playroom activities or go outdoors. Fresh water was available throughout the day, and children were encouraged to be hydrated and independently access water stations.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through personal plans. 'All about me' evidence supported staff with information on children's, health, wellbeing, and safety needs. This was in collaboration with parents. Management and staff were knowledgeable about each child's individual needs. They had developed strategies and areas of development clearly identifying how they supported children to have a positive experience while in the nursery. We found this was supporting children's resilience and developing positive outcomes.

Risk assessments and individual support plans had been developed for children who required additional support. The service had good working relationships with relevant agencies, for example, health visitors and speech and language therapists. As a result, children received the help and support they needed to develop and progress.

Medication was stored securely, and medication records were accurately completed. Accidents and incidents were recorded and appropriately shared with parents. These processes supported children's overall wellbeing and safety.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning.

We observed children who were happy and engaged through leading their own play and learning with support from staff when needed. Staff and management had developed play spaces with consideration to

providing experiences to develop children's curiosity, imagination, and creativity. These included both planned and spontaneous experiences, which supported children to develop friendships and work alongside their peers while supporting children's progression in literacy and numeracy. For example, the children enjoyed ordering food at the mud kitchen and using the price list which supported number knowledge. Parents told us: "Staff honestly treat my child as if my child was their own and make sure he/she is learning new and fun things every day. Patna ECC (Early Childhood Centre) has made my child into a completely different child in a great way. They look at this world with confidence, and they have lots of friends. I am really happy with how they are coming on, and the new things they have accomplished and achieved are amazing."

We found children had a voice and were able to influence experiences on offer through staff considering and implementing opportunities tailored to children's needs and interests as well as through discussions with parents. This was evidenced within the online learning journals and the mind maps where children's progression and learning were recorded, evaluated, and documented the child's voice. For example, children were asked what babies need, and the children listed a few ideas. Another mind map was made to evaluate children's learning. The children's voices captured that babies need milk, covers to stay warm and a buggy as they can't walk yet.

Online learning journals were in place for all children, and these were available for parents to access, comment and connect on their child's progress of play and learning. Observations documented linked to children's individual needs and progress. This evidence was also documented within the nursery wall displays and personal plans showing children's progress and achievements. Most planning was based on children's interests and staff observations of individual children's needs. We would encourage staff and management to continue to develop play and learning through focused observations. This will support staff in making effective assessments while providing resources, reflecting, and reviewing the environment and how they document children's progress and achievements.

All children benefited from free flow access to outdoor play. Children were supported when accessing the outdoors, where they took part in physical play, digging, riding on bikes, running and climbing. Staff and children had taken part in the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) bird count. Children were confident to share their knowledge and interest in the birds they had seen, especially the blue tit, which was nesting in the nesting box in their garden.

Children benefitted from connections to their local community through visits to the woodlands, where they were learning and developing their knowledge about nature and the world around them. Visits to the care home as part of the nursery intergenerational project enabled children and residents to enjoy stories, games, singing and developing friendships. These links with the community were supporting children to have a sense of belonging, develop social skills and learn about people while making connections and learning alongside others.

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 were cared for in a welcoming and well-ventilated environment. The furniture was child-sized, and

some soft furnishings provided comfort for children. There was a secure entry system and a sign-in system for visitors attending the service.

The service has worked hard in developing the outdoor area of the nursery. The outdoor play area had a lot of open-ended resources which the children were accessing. For example, the children made a café and cash registers out of wooden blocks and were selling ice cream, staff joined in with this game. The service had planned to continue with woodland Wednesday and to develop planting and growing their own vegetables. Staff were aware of the importance of outdoor play and encouraged children to be independent, supporting them to risk assess, be active and experience a healthy lifestyle. Parents told us: "The staff and environment are brilliant" and "The nursery is well set out and maintained."

Children's artwork was displayed throughout, celebrating their achievements. This ensured that children knew they mattered and gave them the opportunity to review and reflect on their play and learning.

The quiet space, called the dark den, has been developed within the room. This supports some children and gives them a safe space to reflect, regulate, and have quiet play space. We have asked that this area be further developed with more soft furnishing to make it a more comfortable and cosy area to support children who need to rest, relax, and sleep.

There were different areas for learning within the indoor environment. These were planned and developed through observations of children's learning needs and interests. For example, some children had new babies in their family, so the children were learning about what babies need, the home corner had lots of dolls, baby clothes and a buggy. A child told us "A baby needs milk ". Another child asked for a baby carrier to carry the doll, and a staff member made a baby carrier out of material. This was responding to children's needs and interests.

To enhance the indoor environment further and support children's curiosity, imagination, and creativity, we discussed with the senior leadership team developing open-ended resources and real-life items that would help children's play and learning while developing their interests in these areas.

Overall, staff demonstrated good practice in infection prevention and control. For example, they modelled good hand hygiene. Children were regularly reminded to wash hands at appropriate times, such as before and after eating, which encouraged them to develop healthy habits. There was a nose blowing station that supported children in blowing their noses and washing their hands afterwards to minimise the spread of infection.

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.

Throughout the inspection the management team and staff were open, honest, and reflective on their journey. The whole team had taken time to reflect and identify the improvements required for the service to move forward in a positive way for the children, families, community, and staff, with a focus on delivering the best outcomes for children and families.

The service's values of respect, inclusion, self-belief, and excellence were at the heart of the setting, and

staff practice supported children in feeling valued. Observations of interactions revealed that staff and children were working to uphold these values. The team could confidently share their key aims and vision to support them in delivering the best outcomes for children and families.

The service had developed a monitoring calendar and an improvement plan, which identified key priorities to support development and improvement. This included shared responsibilities throughout the team. Monitoring staff practice, children's personal plans, medication, new planning processes, and the environment were key areas of improvement. These were still being developed. Management shared feedback to staff with areas of strength as well as any areas of improvement. This was supporting staff to review and reflect while understanding their roles and responsibilities.

We have recognised the changes that have been made to improve children's play and learning. The management and staff met regularly to discuss children, experiences, areas that were working well, and areas of improvement. We would encourage management and staff to continue reflecting and reviewing to ensure their pace of change is sustained and they progress with improvements.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were at the initial stages of development. For example, staff and management had put in place new planning documents and trackers to support children's play and learning and spoke confidently about how these would continue to support positive outcomes for children and families. As the team were at the early stages of their improvement cycle, there was little evidence of the impact of recent changes and improvements in the service. We encouraged the management to continue to embed and evaluate recent changes.

Staff had developed positive relationships and effective communication with parents. At drop-off and collection times, parents were welcomed into the service, and the team promoted an open-door policy. Parents were invited to parents' stays and plays, and management sent out regular communication through email and the service's online learning journals. Parents shared, "The kids are greeted at the door with a smile" and "I like how staff engage with myself in the mornings and also in the afternoon at pick up." As a result, parents were encouraged to participate and were informed about their child's play, learning and development.

Through staff leadership roles, children and families were learning about communication top tips and outdoor learning with woodland Wednesday and in the community, for example, walks to the woods where children made a giant bird nest with sticks. Also, sharing better communication skills with parents to support children's language development. This was helping children and family's confidence, and knowledge of outdoors and risky play while developing children's play and learning.

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.

The staff team were warm, welcoming, and caring, and there was a positive ethos throughout the nursery. The nursery was appropriately staffed, and staff were suitably deployed throughout the day to meet children's needs. Throughout the service was a focus on the children as individuals, ensuring that all staff treated children with respect. Staff worked well together as a team, and their different skills and knowledge complimented each other. This resulted in positive interactions with the children. Parents told us: "The

whole team are absolutely fantastic." "Very good staff" and "They are all brilliant." Staff moved in response to children's requests, for example, when children were accessing outdoor play and when they required one-on-one support. They positioned themselves appropriately for maximum supervision both indoors and outside. Staff communicated well with each other, transitions were planned, and children were familiar with the daily routine.

The management team effectively supported staff by spending regular time on the nursery floor. This helped to build positive working relationships and allowed time for professional discussion. Staff were happy, engaged, and shared tasks through working as a team. Staff lunches were organised to minimise disruption, ensuring the day ran smoothly to support the play, care, and learning of the children.

Staff had time at the end of the day to reflect, discuss children individually, and plan for the following day as a team. Staff meetings were held regularly to discuss planning, supporting children, what was working well within the nursery, and any areas they wanted to improve.

We acknowledge that management has been conducting a review regarding supporting children's needs and the deployment of staff due to staff absences. The senior and Equity & Excellence Lead has been covering for staff shortages, which has ensured consistency for families and children and supported continued positive outcomes for all.

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

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| 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? | 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? | 5 - Very Good |
| 4.3 Staff deployment | 5 - Very Good |

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