

Lochnell Pre Five Nursery Unit Day Care of Children

Lochnell Primary School
Benderloch
Oban
PA37 1QS

Telephone: 01631 720 300

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 March 2024

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

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CS2004080537

About the service

Lochnell Pre Five Nursery Unit is provided by Argyll and Bute Council and is situated within Lochnell Primary School. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children not yet attending primary school at any one time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 25 March 2024 and Tuesday 26 March 2024. The inspection was carried out by two early learning and childcare inspectors 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 service registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- contacted families through Microsoft questionnaires to gather their views
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were confident, happy and had formed positive relationships with staff.
- Children were cared for by a staff team that was caring, nurturing and compassionate.
- We observed a balance of adult directed and freely chosen activities which were supporting children to develop key skills.
- Staff leadership roles were supporting children through play and learning experiences to develop their literacy, numeracy, outdoor activities and health and wellbeing knowledge.
- Management and staff have worked hard at creating an environment that supports children to progress in their play and learning.
- Management and staff were committed to the development of the service, working together to establish a shared vision delivering the best outcomes for children and families.
- Planning approaches were in the early stages of development.
- As a team continue reflecting and reviewing to ensure the pace of change is sustained and the service continues to deliver positive experiences and outcomes for children, families, and the nursery as a whole.

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

Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support.

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

We observed warm and caring interactions between staff and children through staff offering praise and encouragement, cuddles and reassurance when needed. Children were confident at approaching staff for support, help and reassurance at appropriate times. As a result, children were confident, happy and had formed positive relationships with staff. Parents told us:

'Lochnell is a lovely fun nurturing nursery with lots of outdoor play'

'The staff are kind, caring and always available to speak about any concerns. They know my child and my child speaks fondly about them. They always update us at the end of the day.'

Children's personal plans, 'all about me' and 'more about me' documents contained relevant core information about children's individual health, welfare, and safety needs. The service communicated effectively with parents through daily conversations at drop off and collection times, newsletters and sharing information through the service's online journal system 'Seesaw'. Management and staff should now look at streamlining information gathered to enable staff to clearly identify children's individual characters, likes, dislikes and areas of current development. Parents told us:

'My child enjoys her/his days at the nursery and the staff are good at letting me know what they've been doing through the day'

'The updates on 'Seesaw' are detailed and allow us to continue with learning at home.'

Mealtimes had been a focus following the last inspection. Staff had identified that some children were responding better through having a soft start breakfast in the morning resulting in children having better engagement in their play and learning. We were able to see children having regular access to fresh water throughout the day ensuring they remained hydrated.

Children now have lunch within the school dining hall and although we can see this has improved the experience for children, we discussed further improvements with consideration to, children having their own choice of where to sit, tablecloths and napkins and introducing plates instead of trays for the children to eat from. Children who have packed lunches should also be given a plate and napkins. To promote good eating habits, we would encourage staff to have a drink or something small to eat along with the children. We also discussed with the manager considering giving children an alternative at lunch if they do not eat what is on offer for example, a sandwich if another hot choice meal is not available. This will ensure no child goes hungry.

Policies and procedures were in place to support staff to safely administer any required medication. The service had reviewed storage, medication templates and updated procedures in line with best practice guidance 'Management of medication in daycare and childminding settings.' This was an area for improvement at the last inspection and has been met.

We found systems were in place to keep children safe. Staff had completed relevant child protection training and were confident in how to report any concerns.

Accident and incidents were being recorded and shared with parents, we would ask that the service implement a monthly audit to identify any areas of risk and any changes required to support a safe environment for children.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning.

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were visibly happy and confident, actively accessing all areas on offer. We observed a balance of adult directed and freely chosen activities which were supporting children to develop key skills. The children engaged well with each other and also invited staff to join them in their play through sharing, taking turns, playing cooperatively while using their imagination and curiosity to develop their play and learning. This showed us that children felt safe, secure, and confident in the setting. Parents told us:

'My child loves nursery. She/he loves the setup, especially the home corner. She /he also loves all the teachers and the activities that they organise'

'I think Lochnell staff are wonderful - huge thank you to all as they really make sure that children have opportunities to develop skills and areas of interest.'

Planning approaches were in the early stages of development. Staff were developing their confidence in the use of floor books to record and extend children's learning. The management team had identified this as an area for continued development. We discussed how staff should be more responsive in their planning through developing strands of learning that are based and respond to individual children's interests. This would further deepen and enhance children's learning, enrich their experiences and support children to lead on their own play and learning. Children told us:

'I like the home corner, and when it's lunchtime, I like when the teachers change the room about'

'I like painting and playing out in the garden.'

Through staff leadership roles children were gaining opportunities through play and learning experiences to develop their literacy, numeracy, outdoor activities and health and wellbeing knowledge. Staff were creating an environment that supported children's curiosity, creativity and imagination while delivering experiences to support children to learn through play. As a result, children were given opportunities to choose from a variety of experiences and develop a range of skills. We would continue to encourage staff and management to keep developing play and learning through focused observations, making effective assessments, while providing provocations, reflecting, and reviewing the environment and how they document children's progress and achievements.

Regular opportunities, and activities are arranged throughout the week for children to have the option to engage in play and learning experiences with the Primary 1 class and the whole school. These transition sessions with the school were supporting children to make links, develop friendships and feel part of the school and nursery community. We joined the nursery children in Primary 1 who chose to have a story.

Children from the nursery were warmly welcomed into Primary 1 which supported them to be relaxed, giving them confidence to participate and engage with their peers and the Primary 1 teacher.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The indoor and outdoor environment had been developed following the last inspection. We can see that the management and staff team have worked hard at creating an environment that supports children to progress in their play and learning. We found the environment was attractive and bright. Staff had developed and set up play spaces with natural materials and resources to encourage different types of play and encourage children to easily select what they wished to play with; for example, the block area, writing and arts and craft area, home corner with real life resources. Parents told us:

'There's investment in the facilities and the nursery is very connected to the main school. The head teacher takes a great interest in the nursery. The outdoor trips are great especially when we live in such a beautiful area'

'Lochnell have been a wonderfully supportive environment for my children. The staff really go above and beyond for the wellbeing of pupils.'

Within the outdoor area children had access to a variety of loose parts play materials to develop their imagination, creativity, and curiosity. For example, creating a car wash using tarpaulin, hoses and fir tree branches and designing a stage for Lochnell's got talent from a wooden pallet and stripped back tree branches tied together. This resulted in children throughout the centre interacting positively with each other while enabling them to be creative.

The flow of the day for children provided a balance of indoor and outdoor play opportunities. All children had direct free flow access to the secure outdoor play area and were encouraged to play outside daily. We observed all children confidently choosing when they wanted to go outside and when to return indoors. We found this was promoting healthy lifestyles and opportunities for children to engage with peers throughout the service developing positive relationships.

We would ask management to continue to monitor access to outdoors as we found at times staff were restricting numbers to eight children only. If more children wish to access outdoors, then staff should be supporting this through looking at the service with a holistic view in relation to ratios as well as following the children's interest and needs.

At the last inspection we highlighted a number of areas within the environment that required to be addressed for example, the children's toilets, the outdoor decking area, children's cloakroom, and appropriate shelter outdoors and that children experience a high-quality environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, well maintained furnishings and equipment that are safe and secure. We identified that areas requiring attention have been addressed and this area for improvement has been met.

Risk assessments had been carried out, identifying potential hazards, enabling staff to put in place appropriate control measures.

We would ask management and staff to continue to reflect and review on the environment with consideration to giving children more space indoors to be creative, review the position of the quiet area and monitor children's use of areas for example, the house area which will support children in purposefully using areas that have been created for play and learning.

We were satisfied with the infection prevention and control practice we observed. However, we would ask that children and staff are encouraged to wash their hands on returning from outdoors and staff monitor handwashing to reduce the spread of infection.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator - 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

We recognise there have been changes within management and the staff team since the last inspection. Throughout the inspection, management and staff responded well taking on advice and encouragement when suggestions were made. We found relationships were developing well within the team. Management and staff were committed to the development of the service, working together to establish a shared vision delivering the best outcomes for children and families and we are confident that the service will continue to grow and move forward. Parents told us:

'Mr Feist has been a fantastic addition to the school, he really has brought a new enthusiasm to the school. My children certainly feel that school is more 'fun' - this is so important for little ones being engaged in learning and wanting to attend school'

'Things appeared to change after Mr. Feist took over, the nursery feels part of the school, the children now attend the school assembly and take lunch in the hall, the updates are more detailed and Mr. Feist often updates seesaw for the nursery, overall things seemed to have changed for the better.'

Staff told us they felt supported by the management team and were beginning to feel more confident in their skills, and their understanding of self-evaluation. As highlighted at the last inspection staff have now taken on leadership roles and responsibilities for example, developing literacy, numeracy, outdoor play and health and wellbeing which was supporting staff to deliver better experiences. Regular team meetings were supporting staff to be reflective and identify what was working well and what needs to improve. This style of leadership was supporting staff's individual strengths and contributed to improved experiences for children.

Following the last inspection, we identified that management should develop and implement robust quality assurance systems with a focus on, monitoring children's play and learning experiences, monitoring of staff practice, and evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole. The newly appointed manager along with the management team and staff have developed a detailed improvement plan identifying what was working well and what needed to be improved with clear targets and evaluations. We can see evidence of progress that has been made on priorities identified. This area for improvement has therefore been met.

We would ask that management now look at developing a more formal monitoring process and staff to continue reflecting and reviewing to ensure the pace of change is sustained and the service continues to

deliver positive experiences and outcomes for children, families, and the nursery as a whole.

Complaints and incidents had been investigated, and the Care Inspectorate had been notified as required. We are satisfied the service has responded appropriately to any issues raised.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator - 4.3 Staff deployment.

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were cared for by a staff team that was caring, nurturing and compassionate and as a team they were dedicated to delivering the best outcomes to children and families. Staff were enthusiastic about the service and their roles; they were respectful to each other through their interactions. This created a positive environment that allowed the children to feel safe and secure, with adults who cared for them. Parents told us:

'I think that all the teachers are brilliant and really couldn't wish for anyone better to teach my child'

'All the staff are lovely and friendly.'

The setting was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of children. We found the staff communicated well with each other throughout the inspection and there was a good mix of skills, knowledge and understanding within the staff team. They worked well together, communicating clearly when their attention was needed with children, or they were moving about the setting and prior to any transitions. This contributed to effective supervision throughout the day resulting in children being confident and comfortable about routines and transitions.

At the last inspection we asked management to monitor and review the deployment and positioning of staff with a focus on staff responsibilities, engagement, and effective supervision to support positive outcomes for children. During the inspection we found staff shared roles and responsibilities well through being in an area over a two-week rotation and ensuring they positioned themselves to support the needs of the children. This was allowing staff to support children's individual needs, develop areas of play and learning while engaging with children in different parts of the nursery for example, snack area, outdoors and creative area. Staff welcomed parents at drop off and collection times giving them the opportunity to share information about a child's day. We would encourage the service moving forward to begin to welcome parents back into the playroom for drop off and collection this will strengthen home links and allow children to share their play and learning in a more visual way with parents.

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

To keep children safe and healthy, management should update the medication policy, guidance and recording of medication procedures in line with current best practice guidance 'Management of Medication in Daycare and Childminding Services'.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24)

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2023.

Action taken since then

Policies and procedures were in place to support staff to safely administer any required medication. The service had reviewed storage, medication templates and updated procedures in line with best practice guidance 'Management of medication in daycare and childminding settings.' This was an area for improvement at the last inspection and has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's play and learning management and staff should look at creating an environment that inspires children's imagination with a focus on loose parts play and natural and open-ended resources. Also providing children with more challenging opportunities to discover, explore, experiment, problem solve and wonder. With consideration to.

(a) Developing children's natural curiosity, sense of wonder and fun through promoting independence and offering challenge.

(b) Management monitoring staff interactions to ensure they are extending children's thinking and widening their skills.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling (HSCS. 1.30) '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).

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2023.

Action taken since then

Through staff leadership roles, children were gaining opportunities through play and learning experiences to develop their literacy, numeracy, outdoor activities and health and wellbeing knowledge. Staff were creating an environment that supported children's curiosity, creativity and imagination while delivering experiences

to support children to learn through play. Management were in the early stages of monitoring staff interactions but had been carrying out informal monitoring. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children experience a high quality environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment that is safe and secure. The provider should review and undertake appropriate maintenance within the inside and outside of the nursery with a focus on;

- Ensuring main toilet door is closing securely and children can open and close independently.
- Replacing missing toilet cubical door.
- Ensuring children have an appropriate area to shelter when outdoors.
- Ensuring decking area is safe for all children to access.
- Ensuring a suitable temperature in the cloakroom area that provides a warm welcoming environment and supports the storage of outdoor clothing.
- Ensuring cloakroom area is decluttered to support a safe, inviting, and welcoming environment for children and families.
- Ensuring wall displays for parents are up to date for example; with current information on staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22). 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17)

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2023.

Action taken since then

During inspection we identified that areas requiring attention have been addressed and this area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

In order to support children's health and wellbeing and that children are having the option to play outdoors at a time that suits their needs. The manager should develop room monitoring arrangements to ensure all children can choose when they access outdoors with a focus on a safe area to access with more exciting and challenging outdoor play experiences.

This is to ensure children access daily fresh air and a well maintained outdoor environment consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32), and 'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors'. (HSCS 1.25).

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2023.

Action taken since then

The flow of the day for children provided a balance of indoor and outdoor play opportunities. All children had direct free flow access to the secure outdoor play area and were encouraged to play outside daily. We observed all children confidently choosing when they wanted to go outside and when to return indoors. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To improve better outcomes for children. Management should develop and implement robust quality assurance systems with a focus on, monitoring children's play and learning experiences, monitoring of staff practice and evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards that state; 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2023.

Action taken since then

The newly appointed manager along with the management team and staff have developed a detailed improvement plan identifying what was working well and what needed to be improved with clear targets and evaluations. We can see evidence of progress that has been made on priorities identified. This area for improvement has therefore been met.

Previous area for improvement 6

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

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2023.

Action taken since then

During the inspection we found staff shared roles and responsibilities well through being in an area over a two-week rotation and ensuring they positioned themselves to support the needs of the children. This was allowing staff to support children's individual needs, develop areas of play and learning while engaging with children in different parts of the nursery for example, snack area, outdoors and creative area.

Staff worked well together, communicating clearly when their attention was needed with children, or they were moving about the setting and prior to any transitions. This contributed to effective supervision throughout the day. 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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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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