

Chirnside Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Chirnside
Duns
TD11 3XH

Telephone: 01890 818 274

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 February 2024

Service provided by:
Scottish Borders Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001976

Service no:
CS2003017365

About the service

Chirnside Primary School Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a service to a maximum of 61 children at any one time between the ages of 2 years to not yet starting primary school, of whom no more than 5 be aged 2 years or:

a maximum of 57 children at any one time between the ages of 2 years to not yet starting primary school, of whom no more than 10 be aged 2 years.

The nursery is an integrated part of Chirnside Primary School in the Scottish Borders. The nursery premises consists of one large playroom assembled into two play spaces. The play space has direct access to the outdoor area to facilitate free flow outdoor play. There is an additional nurture room available. With the support of the early years team, the head teacher is the named manager with overall responsibility for the day to day running of the setting.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 and 30 January 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 several children using the service and received comments from five parents
- Spoke with staff and manager in the service and received seven completed staff questionnaires
- Observed staff practice and daily experiences for children
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with visiting professionals

Key messages

- Children benefit from warm and responsive relationships with caring staff who take a genuine interest in them as individuals.
- Home visits were a supportive link for children and their families between the home and the setting.
- Children benefited from good access to the outdoors which supported their overall health and wellbeing.
- To ensure consistently positive outcomes for children and their families, improvement needs to be continuous and supported by an effective auditing and monitoring systems.

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

Staff knew the importance of partnership working and good relationships had been built with children and their families. They were warmly welcomed into the setting with kind respectful interactions. We observed staff providing parents with updates on their child's day and learning, demonstrating a commitment to effective communication with families. Parents we spoke with, spoke positively about the quality of the service and staff.

Children were treated with warmth and kindness by staff and personal care routines were carried out sensitively and respectfully. We have asked the service to review nappy changing procedures to ensure staff were following the current guidance and children are not at risk from the spread of infection. We directed the setting to the following good practice documents: 'Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding Childminders)' June 2023, and 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings)' May 2018.

Children's lunch and snack times had been reviewed by staff to make improvements. Children's independence was encouraged as they were able to self-select. Children were aware of the routine going to and from the canteen. Food was varied and nutritious and parents and children made their own choices. Lunch was a sociable time as staff sat with children. Most staff engaged well with children and provided support however, we saw some interactions were better than others as some staff focused mainly on having their own lunch. We asked the service to monitor lunches and we will review children's lunch time at the next inspection.

The nurture room provided a space for children to take a break from the larger group and to feel safe and secure. However, the dynamics of the group using the space meant that staff meeting the individual needs of some children impacted on their ability to meet the needs of all children. Further consideration should be given to the group visiting the nurture space so that children have a good experience and quality interactions, and staff who would be available to respond to children's interests. This would contribute to children's positive experiences and outcomes.

Children were safe from harm because staff were clear about their safeguarding responsibility. They received regular training in child protection, which contributed to their understanding of how to keep children safe.

Home visits were used as a supportive way to link between the home and the setting before children take up placement in the service. These visits provide opportunities for families to feel comfortable, have face to face contact with their key worker and ask questions. One parent told us, "My child has developed a good relationship with his key worker, and they really helped him to settle in."

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children experienced play spaces indoors and out that promoted learning and engagement. Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interests. Staff gathered a range of evidence to track a child's development. They used observations of children and tracking tools developed by the local authority. To ensure all children's learning were tracked, a system to focus on several children a week for in depth assessment had been developed. Learning information was regularly shared with parents through the learning journals and the digital platform Showbie.

Children gathered for together time, although this was for a short period some children were unable to concentrate and became disengaged, which disturbed interested children. Staff should reflect on this focused learning time, to ensure all children had the opportunity to engage in their play and experience meaningful social interactions.

Children enjoyed the construction area as they explored height and length. Staff interacted well with children during this activity. Staff told us they had been reflecting on their interactions with children to provide better outcomes.

Children told us, "I like the home corner that is the best thing for me", and "I have loads of friends at nursery, and lots of stuff I really like, strawberries and fruit for snack but I don't like vegetables."

Staff missed opportunities to extend children's thinking and to strengthen their learning. In particular, developing children's language and numeracy skills during science activities and mud play. Staff should make use of open-ended questioning and conversation to promote children's language and numeracy skills. They should continue to develop this within their professional practice.

Focus week allows staff to observe individual children to identify their individual interests. Parents are asked what their child's interests are and what they are learning at home. This allows staff to support children's interests outside nursery, prepare experiences and resources that were of interest to support the child's play and learning. Parents told us, "They would like more dancing, because their child loves dancing, more singing and more reading."

Children had opportunities to make connections within the community to support play and learning, for example visits to the local shop. Families had visited the nursery and shared their skills, for example playing guitar on Burns day. Stay and play sessions were organised for families to be involved in their child's play and learning.

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 benefited from a welcoming environment which was warm, well maintained, furnished and comfortable. There was plenty of natural light and ventilation which supported children's wellbeing.

Play spaces were well organised, resourced and reflected most children's interests. Children had ample space to move around and could choose to be indoors or out, respecting their choices. There were two playrooms in the main space, the garden room and cosy room. In addition, there is a nurture room used daily for specific children. We asked the service to review and consider all play spaces for two-year-olds, to make sure these were effective and developmentally appropriate. Quieter, nurturing spaces would support younger children to feel safe and provide for their individual needs. When asked what would make the service better, one parent told us, "More quiet spaces for children who are sensitive to noise."

The outdoor space provided good opportunities for children to explore, physically active, take risks and be challenged. Children had access to loose parts play with open-ended materials which promoted their creativity and imagination. They had fun, got messy and worked together as they used the large mud area as a swamp. This promoted children's wellbeing, confidence, and resilience.

Children were learning about keeping themselves safe. They proudly wore their new sports safety helmets when riding bikes and safety goggles at the woodwork station. As part of the daily routines children helped to tidy away resources after they had used them, they brushed up sand and helped to mop the floor. This gave children responsibility, helped them to respect their environment and learn valuable life skills. Parents told us, "My child really enjoys their time at nursery. I feel they have learned a lot of new skills and are more prepared for starting primary school." and "My child is happy going to nursery. They have fun and they learn new things from teachers and other kids."

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

Since the previous inspection there had been some changes to the service operation, the management team, and staff. The service is operating as a Hub, Early Learning and Childcare setting and provide funded places for 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds.

An improvement plan had been implemented which identified key areas of development. These included the use of 'Showbie' a communication tool between the setting and families and a digital learning journey for children, engaging parents in family learning through PEEP, improving child-staff interactions, and the environment. As a result, the service was making improvements that impacted positively on outcomes for children.

Parents told us, "Showbie for parents is really good", "The Showbie app is fantastic, it keeps us in contact with what is happening", and "Showbie allows us to see what our children are doing, and it provides us with reminders."

Monitoring and auditing systems had been developed which identified key priorities to support development and improvement. This included shared responsibilities throughout the team. There were no records to show these had been checked or updated. In addition, accident and incident records had been audited however some records showed parents had not signed these records (See recommendation 1).

Management were made aware of the importance of completing relevant notifications to Care Inspectorate (CI) to ensure children's wellbeing and keep them safe.

Regular staff meetings took place and allowed staff time to plan and focus on individual children. Not all staff were able to attend these meetings due to shift patterns. Staff informed us they felt supported by the staff team and management. Staff were preparing to take on champion roles, for example, to support wellbeing, providing resources for sensory and emotions and developing a soft play area.

Staff told us they had regular visits from Scottish Borders Council Early Years team and valued their input in supporting them in introducing changes within the nursery and to reflect on their practice. This meant better outcomes for children. The staff team told us they felt supported by the management team.

The service had developed systems to engage with parents and involved them in the life of the service. Parents were encouraged to attend play and stay sessions and were welcomed into the service each morning. These experiences provided parents and carers with the opportunity to discuss children's needs and helped create positive bonds.

Areas for improvement

1.

The provider should ensure there are robust audit and monitoring system are in place. These should be used by management and staff to monitor and evaluate the setting to ensure continuous high standards and support improvement and better outcomes for children.

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

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

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment

The staff provided a welcoming environment for children. They displayed warmth and kindness and recognised the importance of strong attachments. Parents told us, "Reliable, friendly staff." and "They are approachable and on hand to answer any queries."

While we found that adult to child ratios were met, at times staff deployment impacted on the quality of experiences available to children. Continuity of care for children during our visit was variable. Staff were not always proactive in recognising there were gaps in deployment and communication between staff varied. The service had experienced some absences of staffing and were aware of the challenges this had led to for the staff team. Management and staff should reflect on this situation to ensure positive outcomes for children (see area for improvement 1).

Staff engaged in a variety of training opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills and were proactive in sourcing learning to support them in their role.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure that staff are effectively deployed within the service and they communicate effectively to ensure good quality interaction across the day.

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

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

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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