

Mount Pleasant Nursery Day Care of Children

Mount Pleasant Primary School
Castletown Road
Thurso
KW14 8HL

Telephone: 01847 893 419

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 April 2024

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Mount Pleasant Nursery is a day care of children service situated within Mount Pleasant Primary School in the town of Thurso. The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 60 children aged three years to not yet attending school.

The service is situated in a residential area near a supermarket, shops, a park and other amenities. The children are cared for in a playroom and have access to a large outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 and 26 April 2024. The inspection was carried out by two 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 last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed online questionnaires from nine parents and carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- There was improvement to children's play and learning. Most children received good quality play experiences which impacted positively on their health and wellbeing.
- Staff interactions had improved significantly, impacting positively on children's development.
- Children benefitted from a good range of open ended, natural child centred resources, enabling them to explore their creativity, imagination and problem solving skills.
- Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection.
- There was a shared responsibility to supporting improvement within the service.
- Since the last inspection extensive and robust quality assurance processes had been developed.
- The manager had reviewed staff deployment within the service. This meant that good use was made of staff experience, knowledge and skills, to ensure children's experiences were positive.

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

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. Staff were proactive in supporting children with comfort and reassurance when needed which contributed to children feeling secure in their experience.

Effective personal planning for each child, supported their overall wellbeing. This was carried out in collaboration with families and partners to promote consistency and continuity in care. Most staff spoke knowledgeably about the individual care needs of children and the strategies in place to support them. As a result, children received well-planned care and support to meet their individual needs. This was highlighted as a strength by a parent who told us, "The staff are very friendly and always keep you up to date with your child's progress."

Children experienced unhurried mealtimes with a relaxed, positive atmosphere. Their independence was encouraged through opportunities such as, preparing snack and self-serving during mealtimes. This helped to build their confidence and life skills. Staff recognised the opportunity to build on relationships and joined children at lunch time which promoted meaningful conversations. This contributed to the sociable experience for children and allowed an opportunity for emerging language skills to be developed.

Children and families were valued and respected. Parents were welcomed into the service to drop off and collect their children. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff and enabled opportunity for information to be shared between nursery and home. However, some parents felt the handover at pick up time was a bit rushed and would value more information being shared.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

There was significant improvement to children's play and learning. Most children received good quality play experiences which impacted positively on their health and wellbeing. They were supported to learn and develop through play. We saw them leading their own play experiences and independently selecting resources of their choice. They engaged meaningfully with the experiences offered to them. As a result, most children presented as happy, confident individuals. A parent who told us, "My child really enjoys nursery and is always happy to go and happy when I pick him up. There seem to be lots of fun activities for them to do and he always wants to show me what he has made."

Staff interactions had improved significantly. They understood their role in supporting children's development. Interactions between staff and children were carefully considered and were respectful of children's rights, wishes and choices. Most staff confidently scaffolded their learning experiences, supporting their development in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, while playing with blocks, children explored mathematical concepts around shape, measuring and sorting. Children's vocabulary and language development was supported through staff spontaneously sharing stories with children.

Children benefitted from a good range of open-ended, natural child-centred resources, enabling them to explore their creativity, imagination and problem solving skills. For example, children played with everyday items which sustained their interest for prolonged periods of time, contributing to the fun they had while playing and learning.

Opportunities for risky play were well-supported. For example, outdoors children made good use of the loose parts provided, to create obstacle courses and challenge themselves. Staff used open ended questions to support children to consider how to keep themselves safe when taking risks.

Planning approaches were being developed to ensure a balance of responsive and intentional planning. Staff were becoming more confident in recognising the skills children were developing. This was reflected in the quality of observations within children's learning. Processes in place to track children's progress were still in the early stages of development and had been identified by leaders and staff as a continued area for development.

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

The indoor playroom was decorated in neutral colours which promoted a natural, calm environment. This fostered a welcoming atmosphere for the children. Within the indoor space, children had access to resources that were well presented and encouraged exploration, enquiry and fun. The continuous provision indoors had been well considered to include a wide variety of open ended and natural resources, enabling children to explore opportunities which promoted their curiosity and imagination.

There were cosy areas for children to rest and relax which supported their emotional needs. Staff and children also used these areas for reading stories. We observed nurturing attachments between staff and children during these experiences. This supported children's language development as well as their sense of well-being within the nursery. 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. There were some opportunities for free flow access between the indoor and outdoor play area. However, this was not consistently offered to children throughout the inspection. At times outdoor play was restricted. This should be reviewed and actioned to ensure children have choice around their play and learning experiences.

The service had developed effective systems to keep children safe. Staff had good knowledge and understanding of our SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) keeping children safe campaign, and how this supported them to ensure children were accounted for at all times. Staff communicated well with each other regarding numbers of children and which area they had chosen to play in. This created a safe and secure environment where children could enjoy a variety of play experiences, supported by effective staff practice.

Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. For example, children were confident in their hand washing routines at snack and lunchtimes and after returning from outdoor play.

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

There was a shared responsibility to supporting improvement within the service. Since the last inspection, extensive and robust quality assurance processes had been developed. As a result, focussed and meaningful systems for the leadership team and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service were now in place. This meant that areas for improvement were identified, shared and actions were taken to make positive changes to children's experiences. For example, changes to staff deployment and children's play experiences. This resulted in improved outcomes for children.

Good leadership resulted in staff who had confidence in their capacity to support children and families to progress and achieve. There was a clear cycle of reflection and improvement within the service. Regular support and supervision sessions provided an opportunity for staff to be clear on their responsibilities and accountable for their role. Staff engaged effectively with the process to reflect and improve their practice, enabling learning to be identified. Staff told us they felt well-supported by the leadership team. This contributed to everyone feeling confident to initiate well-informed change and take responsibility for the process. As a result, children benefitted from improved outcomes and play experiences.

The leadership team should continue to embed and sustain the good quality practices, to ensure children and families continue to experience good quality care and support.

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

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them well. They recognised that continuity of care was important for children. Since the last inspection, the manager had reviewed staff deployment within the service. This meant that good use was made of staff experience, knowledge and skills, to ensure children's experiences across their day was positive. All staff communicated well and in a respectful manner to ensure children's needs were met. This contributed to children being respected and created a positive team ethos within the service.

The manager told us that, availability of supply staff was limited. The manager strived to provide consistency of care within the staff team. Where possible the manager used the same supply staff to minimise disruption to children's routines. However, there were occasions when the manager was unable to identify staff to manage absence. This meant they had to make changes to service delivery, to ensure children's safety.

Parents were very complimentary of the staff team, some comments included:

"The staff are all lovely and my child is very fond of them all."

"The staff are nice and my child loves them."

"I feel all the staff are absolutely amazing with my wee boy"

Staff provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children throughout the day. Staff demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play experiences. This resulted in positive engagement and interaction.

Overall, the deployment and levels of staff within the nursery was effective. For the majority of time, a good staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs. However, during busier times of the day there were occasions when the staffing arrangements did not meet children's needs consistently.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 19 June 2023, the provider must ensure improved outcomes for children and practice by implementing effective systems of quality assurance.

To do this the provider must at a minimum, ensure:

- a) The management team are supported to be able to undertake effective quality assurance.
- b) Staff are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding around self-evaluation processes and are involved in the systematic evaluation of their work and the work of the service.
- c) Clear and effective plans are in place for maintaining and improving the service.
- d) Regular and effective support and supervision for all staff is implemented.
- e) The management team effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole.

This is to comply with Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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

This requirement was made on 14 June 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Since the last inspection, extensive and robust quality assurance processes had been developed. As a result, focussed and meaningful systems for the manager and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service were now in place. This meant that areas for improvement were identified, shared and actions were taken to make positive changes to children's experiences.

Met - outwith timescales

Requirement 2

By 16 August 2023, the provider must ensure positive outcomes for the children using the service. To do this the provider must ensure, the manager has sufficient time allocated to undertake the role effectively.

This is to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a)(b) (welfare of Users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/10).

This is in order to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

This requirement was made on 14 June 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The manager explained that she had delegated some of the management role and responsibilities to other members of the management team. Each member of the team now took the lead role for a specific area within the nursery.

We were able to see that this had had a positive impact on the quality of the service provided and outcomes for children.

Met - outwith timescales

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 support positive outcomes for children's wellbeing, care, learning and development, the service should ensure that personal plans provide enough information to enable staff to support children's individual identified needs to be met effectively.

This should include but is not limited to, including detailed strategies which meet an individual's needs and respect their and their family's, preferences and wishes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 6 December 2023.

Action taken since then

Personal plans were in place for all children and provided enough information to enable staff to support individual needs. Regular reviews and consultation with parents and carers supported consistency in the care and support being delivered.

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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