

Methilhaven Nursery Day Care of Children

Kirkland Parade
Methil
KY8 3DL

Telephone: 01334 659486

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 May 2024

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

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CS2023000173

About the service

Methilhaven Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 39 children at any one time, from two years to an age to attend primary school. No more than 15 may be age two to three years at any one time.

The recently opened service is co-located within the Methilhaven Care Village in Methil, Fife. This purpose-built service is finished to an extremely high standard and children have access to a two-to-three-year playroom and a three-to-five-year playroom. There are toilets and changing facilities in each playroom. There is also direct access from each playroom to secure garden spaces. As the service is co-located within the care village, children, families, and care home residents benefit from a shared lounge space. This space is used regularly to support intergenerational opportunities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 and 21 May 2024 between 09.15 and 17.00. We provided feedback on 21 May 2024. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and any complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

spoke with children using the service

spoke with staff members

reviewed feedback from 11 families using MS forms

reviewed feedback from staff members employed in the service using MS forms

spoke with senior management

sought feedback from relevant professionals

observed practice and daily life

reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children benefitted from innovative and inspirational opportunities to participate in regular intergenerational learning experiences.

Staff had formed strong connections with the children and their families. Staff had developed positive ways to ensure children and their families could influence and lead improvement.

Children were supported to flourish and thrive as they experienced a variety of rich resources across the service. These opportunities promoted children's natural curiosity, creativity, and imagination.

Children were empowered to lead their own play and learning, this was skilfully enhanced by caring and knowledgeable staff.

Children's health and wellbeing was very well supported by a calm, peaceful, and loving environment.

The service was passionate about continuous improvement through highly effective self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. There was a clear commitment to improving outcomes for children and their families.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this quality indicator as excellent, where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children received excellent care and support from a staff team who knew them and their families very well. There was an exceptionally positive ethos of nurture and care within the team. Staff understood the importance of strong connections with children and their families, this was a key priority within the service. This approach ensured children felt safe, secure, loved, and encouraged children to thrive. Almost all families strongly agreed that they had a strong connection with staff. Some comments included,

'Each and every staff member always speaks and always makes my child feel safe, which to me is most important.'

'They are very friendly and are always there to listen. They take great care of my child.'

'All staff in early entrants and 3-5s have made us feel welcome, as a family. They have taken so much time to get to know our child and work so hard to provide fun learning opportunities for them.'

Highly effective personal planning ensured children's wellbeing needs were being consistently met. Staff worked in partnership with families to gather essential information about children's individual needs. Positive working relationships had been developed with external agencies and support organisations, such as Speech and Language, local Health Visiting Team, 'The Big Hoose' and Fare Share which allowed a high level of support for children and their families. We spoke to a Health Visitor who confirmed the positive impact on children and their families through highly effective partnership working. They told us 'we feel welcomed and respected when visiting the nursery and all the staff are welcoming, approachable and friendly.'

Personal learning journals were used effectively and showed the progression children were making. Children's individual learning and progress was shared with families using an online digital platform. All families we spoke with told us they felt fully involved in their children's development and felt included in their care and support. One parent told us, 'Staff are always available to discuss learning and share information. We have regular chats with our child's keyworker, and we are involved in setting their next steps.' This ensured children's care and support met their individual needs, and demonstrated the service's commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of children and families was at the heart of the service.

Children benefitted from innovative intergenerational opportunities which led to outstanding experiences and outcomes for children and older people. The service had spent the last three years developing and sensitively implementing these experiences prior to moving into the co-located space within Methilhaven Care Village. The carefully planned regular gatherings helped children to develop empathy and mutual respect whilst developing positive friendships with both care home residents and day care service users.

During our visit, we saw children and older residents having fun and laughing together whilst playing picture bingo, they chatted happily, clearly enjoying each other's company. They also enjoyed singing favourite songs together such as 'Wind the Bobbin up' and 'How much is that doggy in the window?'

Children had been learning about the residents' lives and shared their own experiences from home and nursery with their older friends. The manager of the care home told us that these opportunities helped to prevent social isolation for the residents and improved their overall well-being. Children had opportunities to develop their communication and social skills and the visits enhanced children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff showed unwavering commitment to their intergenerational work and had developed positive links with a variety of services and organisations both locally and nationally to further develop their aspirational practice.

They systematically reflected and evaluated the experiences to ensure children continued to have fun and to benefit from these opportunities. We were confident children's longer-term outcomes were being significantly improved from this inclusive programme of activities and that other services could learn from this practice to strengthen communities.

Children and their families were fully involved by staff to create a rich mealtime experience. Children were supported to be independent, and their wishes and choices were respected. A frequent consultation process ensured that children and their families were involved in developing the service and their views were valued by staff. We saw children and staff connecting and engaging in conversations. Mealtimes were well planned, unhurried, and relaxed. Staff supported some of the youngest children and were nurturing and sensitive to their individual needs and preferences.

Children's health and wellbeing was very well supported through correct and well organised storage of medication.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were happy, secure, and deeply engaged in a variety of high-quality play experiences across the service.

Children were independently leading their own learning; they were empowered to choose where and what they played with. Free flow access to outdoor spaces further ensured children could make choices and decisions in their play. The outdoor play spaces offered excellent opportunities for risky and challenging play, and children made very creative use of all the space in the outdoor area.

Children benefitted from a rich, stimulating, and interesting environment; we saw children engaged in play for extended periods across their session. These carefully planned experiences and activities promoted children's curiosity and imagination. One child spent a lot of time creating a painting of their dad and used a variety of craft materials in their creation.

Staff had extremely high aspirations for all children in the service. We saw that their play and learning was effectively enhanced by questioning from the highly skilled staff team. Through carefully considered interactions, children's play was extended, their thinking was challenged. As a result, children were highly valued, listened to, and supported to achieve their full potential.

Language, literacy and numeracy experiences were skilfully embedded across the service. Learning opportunities were significantly enhanced in these key areas as this had been a focus within the services improvement plan. We saw staff encouraging mathematical language during water play, the youngest children were discussing full and empty. There was also a wide variety of mark making opportunities available throughout the nursery including notebooks and pens in most areas. This carefully considered approach supported children's early language, literacy and numeracy development.

Planning approaches were responsive to children's interests and staff creatively supported these interests across the service. This approach encouraged children to feel valued, respected and included. We sampled several personal learning journals and they all contained significant observations and clearly showed children's next steps in learning. We saw how this learning was shared with families using Seesaw and how families shared photos of what their children were doing at home. Floor books amplified children's voice and their thoughts and ideas were highly valued by staff. Creative use of QR codes throughout the service shared important aspects of learning with families. This ensured families played an active role in their child's learning and development at home and in the service.

Children's learning experiences were carefully tracked, gaps were effectively identified, and staff planned specific learning experiences for children's overall development. This approach ensured that staff provided various opportunities to extend individual learning. Children were supported to reach their full potential and were appropriately challenged.

To support this distinctive intergenerational programme, and overall skills development of children, the management and staff team had creatively developed a bespoke planning format specifically for this. They confidently shared with us how this supported activity planning and skills progression of children participating in intergenerational learning. To further support children's learning the service has developed a learning overview. This has been created using Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes and aspects of The Health and Social Care Standards. This document is in the initial stages and will support staff to adapt current learning journals to track the unique learning covered during intergenerational experiences.

We were confident that these excellent practices were sustainable and that excellent performance in this area would be maintained.

How good is our setting?

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children experienced a very high-quality environment. It was spacious and bright and well organised. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces were creatively laid out and used well, considering children's development, and learning stages. Children and their families were warmly welcomed into this new build setting each day. This approach ensured that children and their families were valued, respected, and loved and gave a strong message that they mattered.

High quality furniture and resources supported staff to thoughtfully set up indoor play spaces, all areas were well resourced with exciting and interesting materials and provocations which captured children's curiosity and imagination. Real life authentic resources such as ornate jewellery and beautiful teapots enhanced areas such as the home corner and the water tray, sparking children's excitement. This made the spaces inviting and filled with endless possibilities. The rich spaces challenged children to have high aspirations and push forward with their thinking. This consistency of approach ensured all children could have similar experiences across the service.

Consideration had been given to creating quiet spaces for children to rest and relax. This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Children benefitted from direct access to the secure outdoor space. Children moved freely from indoors and outdoors and were leading their own play and learning. Skilled staff supported children to be active, healthy and to take risk in their play, for example climbing on and jumping off equipment. Children understood their own capabilities and how to keep themselves safe. Children comfortably engaged with a variety of loose parts resources and worked together. Staff were enthusiastic about outdoor play experiences. The service was well equipped with appropriate children's clothing to ensure that they could benefit from outdoor play throughout the year.

Staff implemented robust infection, prevention, and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. The environment was very well maintained, and we observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing throughout the session. This contributed to keeping children safe and healthy.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Children benefitted from a service that was highly committed to continuous improvement. Staff placed children's outcomes at the heart of their work. The service developed their vision, values, and aims in collaboration with children and their families, and this was revisited when it moved into their new co-located building. The vision values and aims were embedded, staff, children and families had a shared understanding of this, and it contributed to the highly positive ethos of the service.

The management team and staff were committed to the ongoing development of the service to ensure children reached their full potential. A relevant improvement plan was in place which was created with staff to enable a shared vision. Feedback was regularly sought from children and families to ensure their wishes and choices were fully considered. This demonstrated a reflective and considered approach to the development of the service. This also supported the management and staff to be reflective and encouraged children and families to feel included in the life and development of the service. Families confirmed they felt involved, one parent commented that 'there are regular online questionnaires sent out from the nursery. I am often asked for my views and opinions.'

Leadership opportunities across the team promoted leaders at all levels. This considered individual strengths, skills, and interests. By building on existing strengths staff felt supported to further develop their practice and skills. Training opportunities were linked to these roles and this supported staff confidence in taking forward their chosen area. Staff spoke confidently and passionately about these leadership roles and how this had positively impacted outcomes for children, their families, and the wider community.

Staff said that they felt well supported by management. Staff 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that their wellbeing needs were recognised and supported by leaders. One staff member told us that 'I have positive relationships with the senior leadership team as well as with the extended leadership team. I know where and who to go to for support or guidance. I whole heartily believe that I am respected and supported by an amazing team who look out for one another.'

Quality assurance was prioritised across the service, and this enabled reflection on the service provision and planning for improvements. Processes were effectively used to highlight strengths as well as areas for development. All staff had been involved in self-evaluation discussions using a quality framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school-aged childcare. This approach supported children's play and learning across the service. This also highlighted that a culture of continuous improvement was embedded within the service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as excellent, where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

Children benefitted from a skilled, knowledgeable, and nurturing staff team who placed children at the heart of the service. Children and their families were warmly greeted by staff as they arrived at the service. As a result, children felt loved and respected by people who cared for them. Positive connections were prioritised across all aspects of the service including the intergenerational opportunities. We saw strong relationships between staff, children, their families, and care home residents. This approach ensured everyone felt valued, respected, included, and loved.

Staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to consistently meet children's needs throughout their session. Communication between staff was a key strength, meaning staff shared essential information about children. This ensured children had continuity of care, felt safe and were listened to. Staff responded to children and supported their individual needs very well. Staff were effectively deployed to ensure children were safe. Staff interactions were carefully considered and purposeful, to enhance and extend play and learning opportunities for children across the service. This also created an environment that valued and honoured children's rights.

The management team were a visible presence across the service. They regularly supported staff by spending time in each playroom. This resulted in positive working relationships, effective monitoring of staff practice and a staff team that felt supported and valued.

Families told us that there were always enough staff in this service to meet their child's needs. One parent said, 'the room is always found to be in a calm manner and the staff always interact with the children or are sitting with them.' This supported children to thrive and flourish.

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?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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