

St. Elizabeth's Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 May 2024

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015347

About the service

St. Elizabeth's Primary School Nursery Class is located in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire. The service is registered to provide a care service to 128 children aged from two to those not yet attending primary school. There were currently 52 children registered with the service.

Children are cared for in extended playrooms within the primary school. Playrooms have direct access to enclosed outdoor play spaces and children have regular access to natural environments in the nearby area. The service is close to shops, parks and public transport links. There are established links with various groups in the local community.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 and 30 April 2024 between the hours of 09:00 and 16:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 1 May 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 and consulted with 31 of their parents/carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received feedback from one visiting professional.

Key messages

- There was a calm, welcoming ethos and consistent nurturing approach evident across the service.
- Children benefitted from a spacious indoor and outdoor play and learning environment.
- To ensure children's privacy and good infection prevention and control, procedures for children accessing toilets and nappy changing areas must be improved.
- A planned audit of the play and learning environment would assist in addressing areas which would benefit from increased resources, reviewed layout and assist with staff deployment.
- Personal plans and medication procedures were areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. These have not been met and therefore reinstated at this inspection.
- The management and staff team worked well together with a committed and dedicated approach to the continued improvement of the service.

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?	3 - Adequate
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 were respectful, caring and nurturing to all children. Children were offered cuddles, praise and reassurance and supported to share their feelings. Staff knew the care and support needs, personalities and interests of children and the needs of their families well. Parents were welcomed into the nursery each day and regular stay and play sessions provided additional opportunities for families to be included in their child's day at nursery. A recent "butty and a blether" transition session supported parents whose children were due to start school later in the year. One parent told us, "All staff know my child as an individual, not just the staff in the room they are in. Each day my child is so excited to run through the door and they are greeted with a warm, nurturing approach from staff."

Most parents agreed staff knew their child well, including what they liked and what was important for their care. One parent commented, "We share updates together with staff regularly. We have our online diary which is easy to work and can talk about this at any time with staff."

Personal plans were in place for all children. Some personal plans did not contain a start date or specific information relating to care and support needs, such as children's sleep routines. Some children's next steps in development, play and learning were not specific and meaningful. Although most parents told us they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan, we discussed the improvements and consistent approach needed. This would ensure personal plans and additional support plans were a current reflection of each child's care and support needs, progress and development with specific, individual next steps and strategies in place. This is in line with legislation and was advised at the last inspection.

Strong relationships with external agencies ensured children with additional support needs received support to enable them to reach their full potential. One professional who worked closely with the service commented, "As a visiting professional I have found all staff to be extremely welcoming and inclusive. They work closely with families to support and develop nurturing relationships particularly for those with additional support needs. They are always keen for feedback and ongoing development to support the needs of their children and school community."

Children benefitted from a rolling snack which meant they could decide when to eat. Staff were vigilant as to who had eaten to ensure children's intake was monitored. Lunchtimes had been monitored and evaluated to improve children's experiences. Food was plentiful and children chose from varied options. They were able to change their mind, have extra portions and were observed to be relaxed and confident in making choices of what to eat and where to sit. Children told us, "I'm having a cheese sandwich. It's yummy", and "We can choose what we like."

We advised staff to review some of the lunchtime practice, for example, ensuring a member of staff sat alongside children as they ate. This would support relaxed conversation, ensure all children drank over lunchtime and prevent choking or safety issues. As positive mealtime experiences support child development, develop key social skills as well as healthy eating habits, we agreed with the service's plans to continue monitoring children's mealtimes.

Children's medication was stored in an office and not in playrooms. Not all medication was stored in line with guidance and not all sections of forms were completed to show the signs, symptoms and actions to be taken if a child became unwell. To ensure children's health and safety and that all information was clear, medication storage and associated paperwork should be improved. This was advised at the last inspection. This would ensure medication was more accessible to staff when required, all information on forms was clear and complete and procedures were in line with current guidance.

Management and staff were clear about their roles in keeping children safe. Staff had child protection training relevant to their role and confidently spoke of the procedures they would follow should any concerns arise. Staff added, "At the start of the new term, the headteacher speaks to all staff about child protection and updates them on any new information. I keep myself up to date by accessing a learn online programme."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Most children were actively engaged and having fun in leading their own play and learning, both indoors and outdoors. Staff were responsive to children and a balance of free play and planned activities supported their interests and learning. Gentle interactions, encouragement and open questioning from staff supported children to be happy and confident learners. Children were exploring the properties of sand and water. One child said, "Watch this when I put water in it (water into the sand). Look what's happened. It's hard like a rock," and "I've made a water shaker" (joining blocks and filling with water).

Most parents told us they had the opportunity to discuss their child's care, play and learning. One added, "Observations are always in great detail and it's so reassuring to know that my child is playing and learning and is happy and content in a place they love to be."

We observed a group of children who had been interested in finding out about different artists. They were investigating the properties of paint, brushes and tools to recreate and explore different styles of painting. Children told us, "This is like dots and some splashes", and "I used black paint and white paint and mixed it." Children's artwork was praised and displayed in a drying area before taking home. This valued and respected children's work.

Play experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Examples included staff reading stories at children's requests, children making their own books with drawings and mark making, staff singing songs and rhymes using puppets and counting naturally with children throughout the session. One child built a tower using blocks. They told us, "That's three bricks. I'm three and that's a three on the clock."

Most resources were at children's level and easily accessible, for example, paint was in easy to use pumps, craft materials, games, puzzles and books displayed on open shelving where children could easily see them. To further support children's choice and communicating their wishes, we advised adding labels or pictures for resources which were stored in cupboards. To stimulate children's interest and enhance play and learning opportunities, more resources including diverse and real-life resources should be added to home corners. Characters and furniture should be available for dolls houses and small world play. This would support and extend imaginative play.

Loose parts play materials, which are a collection of open-ended natural or manmade objects which children can use in many ways to extend their ideas and thinking were available indoors and outdoors. There were plans to develop this further in all outdoor play areas. This would offer increased opportunities for more imaginative and creative play. A sensory area using real plants and natural materials was being developed in the outdoor play space for younger children. This would ensure all children had daily access to a softened, natural environment within their dedicated outdoor play spaces.

There was a current focus on transition with opportunities for children and families to visit and play together. Examples included weekly sibling lunches where older children in the school joined their younger brother or sister for lunch in the nursery, buddy play times where older children visited the nursery to play or read stories together. One child told us, "My brother is coming here for lunch with me. I love him." There were further plans to link with the primary one class to explore active play and learning together. This increased children's play and learning opportunities and further supported children's transition to school.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The service had been extended to accommodate additional numbers of children, although the service was not at full capacity. This meant children had access to a large play and learning environment. Large windows and doors ensured there was plenty natural light and ventilation. We advised monitoring the temperatures within playrooms and which windows and doors were open depending on the weather. This would contribute to maintaining a comfortable play and learning environment for children and staff.

Spacious cloakrooms with named coat pegs, space for children's belongings and systems for children to store or display their artwork respected and valued children, sharing the message that children mattered. One parent added, "The environment is clean, safe and suitable."

Children had access to a wide variety of play spaces within the extended nursery and school environment. This offered space for energetic, physical play, rest and relaxation and areas for individual or small groups to come together. We acknowledged the service had reviewed and changed the layout of playrooms, particularly for the older children due to the increased space now available to them. We advised the service to continue to evaluate and monitor the use of playrooms, the layout and resources available to children as planned. Consideration should be given to ensuring a well-resourced home corner with diverse and real life objects was accessible to all children throughout the day, including more inviting, comfortable areas for children to sit and play. This would support children to settle, rest and relax in cosy, homely play spaces.

Handwashing facilities, children's toilets and nappy changing areas were accessible for each age group from their designated playrooms. However, some children were being changed in the younger children's changing area, as there was not a suitable changing unit in place for older children. The toilet doors in the older playroom were left open and this area was used as an exit from the playroom to the outdoor area. Laundry appliances and clean laundry were stored in an area where outdoor clothing was stored. We had in-depth discussions with the management team and provider of the service in regards to current procedures which had an impact on the privacy and dignity of children and raised infection prevention and control concerns. (see requirement one)

Secure entry systems and fob access to playrooms contributed to children's safety. Although there were positives to having additional space to play, we advised the need for more robust risk assessments for all indoor and outdoor environments. This was particularly important due to the challenge and location of increased playroom spaces which meant staff were deployed in more playrooms and children went between several play spaces independently. As groups of children also accessed areas within the school environment each day and there were plans for nursery and primary one playing and learning together, more detailed risk assessments should be in place. (see area for improvement 1)

Children's personal information was stored securely. Appropriate systems were in place to manage electronic information. This was in line with general data protection requirements and ensured safety and confidentiality.

Requirements

1. By 9 August 2024, the provider must ensure children have access to toilet and nappy changing facilities which ensure children's privacy and dignity, health and wellbeing is maintained.

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

- a) ensure children's privacy and dignity is maintained when using toilet and nappy changing facilities
- b) ensure current infection prevention and control and design guidance is adhered to
- c) ensure nappy changing areas have appropriate nappy changing units and all required resources are stored hygienically
- d) ensure nappy changing doors and toilet doors remain closed throughout the day and when in use
- e) ensure laundry appliances are stored in an appropriate area inaccessible to children
- f) ensure freshly laundered bedding/clothing is stored hygienically.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a)(Welfare of users) of the The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210)

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My environment is safe and secure" (HSCS 5.19).

This is to ensure facilities are consistent with Scottish Government document, Space to Grow: design guidance for early learning and childcare and out of school care settings.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's safety and wellbeing, the provider should ensure there are robust risk assessments in place for all indoor and outdoor areas children can access.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.19).

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

The management and staff team worked well together. This created a welcoming, nurturing inclusive environment with the nursery class fully included within the school. Parents told us, "We are always greeted by staff when we arrive at the door, the management and nursery staff. They all know our child by name and it makes us feel so welcome."

A shared vision, values and aims had been updated following consultations with children, families, staff and stakeholders. The vision was reflective of the needs and aspirations of children and families, supporting staff to get it right for them. This was displayed throughout the setting to ensure all visitors were aware.

An improvement plan with key priorities linking primary and nursery classes was used well as a working document, showing clear progress and developments. Following audits of consultations, results and outcomes were shared with families. Most parents and staff who completed our questionnaires agreed they were confident the service was well managed and that they and their child were involved in meaningful ways to help develop the service with their ideas and suggestions used to influence change. This ensured people who used the service were included and informed.

Good leadership supported staff confidence in their role and abilities. Staff appraisals recognised individual strengths, training needs and areas for development and interest to take forward. Staff confidently told us of the support from the management team in enabling them to progress. Comments included, "I feel our management team are all very responsive to staff needs and will support all staff as best they can." and "They take an active interest in all staff personally and professionally. I learn new ways to reflect on my own practice and learning new ideas for experiences for the children."

We shared information on required notifications which must be submitted to the Care Inspectorate. To support ongoing improvement, the management team should familiarise themselves with the document "Records that all registered services must keep and guidance on notification reporting" and routinely access information within "The Hub" section of the Care Inspectorate's website and regular provider email updates. Sharing information with the Care Inspectorate and keeping abreast of current good practice helps to support children's safety and wellbeing.

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

There were sufficient numbers of staff in place to meet the needs of children in attendance, with a mix of ages, skills and experience across the team. Staff were flexible, communicated and worked well together when leaving the playroom, utilising other parts of the school environment with groups of children or attending to tasks. This contributed towards children's safety and offered a variety of experiences to benefit children.

Following some staffing changes, the staff team were now more stable and were observed working well as a team. Arrangements were in place to welcome children and families into one of the playrooms, which promoted good communication about the child's day at nursery and built trusting relationships with families. To provide continuity and positive outcomes for all children and families, this good practice should be shared across the setting.

Staff breaks were planned and flexible to have minimum impact on children, for example over children's lunchtimes, while still enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. To ensure children can independently access all core provisions such as the home corner, book corner and associated resources throughout their session, further consideration should be given to layouts and staff deployment when undertaking the planned environment audit. This would contribute to increased positive, nurturing experiences for all children.

All parents who completed our questionnaires and spoke with us over the course of the inspection, agreed they were confident staff had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for their child and support their learning. Most agreed there was always enough staff in the setting. Comments included, "They are a loveable team", and "I have been able to attend stay and play sessions which has allowed me to see the workings of the nursery and staffing."

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

The manager and staff should review the format of personal plans to ensure that each child's personal plan clearly shows their current care and support needs and how these needs will be met within the service. The "All about me" sheets should be reviewed for the younger children to include if, when and for how long the child should sleep. All personal plans should be reviewed with parents once every six months, or sooner if required or requested, in line with legislation.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards 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 11 December 2018.

Action taken since then

We sampled personal plans from each age group of children. Not all personal plans clearly demonstrated children's current care and support needs and how these would be met within the service, for example, times of children's sleep were not recorded accurately. Some start dates, significant updates, progress or achievements had not been clearly recorded for some children. The management team agreed there needed to be a more consistent approach.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 2

The manager and staff should ensure that the medication forms and procedures are in line with current good practice guidance "Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services." They should ensure that:

- the updated parental consent forms for medication and administration of medication forms are used consistently throughout the nursery
- all required sections of the forms are completed
- the signs and symptoms of children's conditions are recorded
- the parent/carer has signed to confirm they are aware their child has received medication at the service when they collect the child
- a record is kept of when a child has refused medication or when medication could not be given, with the reasons and the actions taken by the nursery.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice." (HSCS 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 11 December 2018.

Action taken since then

Not all medication was stored in line with guidance or easily accessible to staff throughout the day. Not all consent and administration of medication forms contained clear information about the signs, symptoms and actions to be taken in the absence of a medical plan, for example, the absence of an individual asthma plan. The management team agreed to review this and agreed there needed to be a more consistent approach.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
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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