

Hayocks Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

Lumsden Place
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 April 2024

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003017306

About the service

Hayocks Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 48 children. No more than 12 children can be aged from two years to under three years, and 36 children can be aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is situated within Hayocks Primary School which is close to shops, local amenities and public transport routes. The accommodation is on one level. There is a small entrance foyer with a secure entry system. Children are cared for in two playrooms and a dining area. Each playroom has direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 24 and 25 April 2024 between 09:30 and 17:00. 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 received electronic questionnaires from ten of their families
- spoke with ten members of staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind and compassionate care. Staff were nurturing and respectful, responding to children's individual needs and preferences.
- Personal plans should be developed to ensure that children's health, well-being needs and support strategies are clearly recorded and updated as required.
- Children were happy and engaged in play and learning experiences throughout the inspection.
- Children were relaxed and happy in a warm and welcoming environment.
- Staff were enabled to develop their leadership skills and support positive outcomes for children and families.
- Improvements in staff deployment were necessary to support staff well-being and to ensure all children's needs are consistently met across the day.

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?	3 - Adequate

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. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind and compassionate care. Staff interactions were nurturing, respectful and responsive to children's individual needs and preferences. This supported children's wellbeing and helped them to develop positive relationships. One parent told us, "Everyone has been so friendly, welcoming and supportive. They have gone out their way to get to know my child and their needs to help them settle in and get the best out of attending the nursery." As a result, children were happy and settled.

Almost all children enjoyed a positive lunchtime experience. Mealtimes were under review during our inspection as there had recently been changes to the catering staff role. The service were still waiting for serving equipment to create more opportunities for children to self-serve. Children poured their own drinks and cleared their plates with staff available to support where required. Staff sat with children and chatted about their day and home lives. This supported children to develop their independence and social skills. We asked the service to ensure that an alternative lunch option or additional snacks were provided for children who did not eat the food provided for lunch. This would ensure that children received enough food throughout the day. At times, some staff were stretched and some children's needs were not met at the right time. Children's well-being would benefit from improvements to staff deployment during mealtimes, this would ensure that all children have a quality mealtime experience.

Children and families were at the heart of the service. Families had regular opportunities to attend parent workshops and parent and baby sessions. One parent told us, "The nursery provides many stay and play sessions amongst other events." The service also provided a food bank, clothes bank and had recently developed a 'gift giving tree' which enabled families to donate presents for children. This promoted positive outcomes for children and families and supported children to reach their full potential. We discussed encouraging parents to come back into playrooms daily to continue to develop strong relationships with families.

While children's wellbeing and development was supported by staff who knew them well, personal plans lacked key information and did not reflect children's current needs. Written personal plans should be developed to ensure that children's health, well-being needs and support strategies are clearly recorded and updated as required (see area for improvement 1). This would ensure that temporary or new staff have a clear understanding of all children's health and well-being needs to ensure children experience consistent quality care and support.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and engaged in play and learning experiences throughout our inspection. We observed children confidently self-selecting resources that captured their imagination and enriched their play. As a result, children were able to lead their own play and learning.

Staff were skilled in their interactions, supporting children to extend their learning through an effective use of open ended questions. For example, we observed children being encouraged to figure out how to mix

different colours of paint and explore how water moves through different objects. Staff knew when to support and extend children's learning and when to observe play. This promoted curiosity and helped children to develop their problem solving skills.

Children had fun whilst engaging in play experiences in defined areas to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. During our visit we observed children joyfully singing along with Disney songs and playing mathematical games on the promethean board. We observed children mark making and cuddling with staff while reading stories. Numeracy and literacy workshops had been provided for families and were well attended. Home learning bags had also been developed for families to support children's learning through play at home. One parent told us, "My child has fun learning their numbers and letters and has come on leaps and bounds thanks to the nurseries fun approach to learning." We suggested how children could benefit from a more holistic approach to numeracy and literacy opportunities throughout the indoor and outdoor environment. This would help children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills further during different types of play throughout the day.

The 'Communication Champions,' who are staff with leadership roles to support language and communication, had embedded Makaton throughout the service. Makaton is a communication tool that uses speech, signs and symbols. As a result, all children were well supported to communicate their needs and feelings, promoting an inclusive ethos that supported children's well-being. During our inspection early years staff were providing Makaton training to school staff. This ensured that children's communication needs were supported as they moved into school.

Children's progress was shared with parents online. All parents told us they felt involved in their children's care, play and learning. One parent stated, "If I ever want to know anything about my child's play time or learning all I have to do is ask and I get an answer." As a result, parents felt valued and included in their child's daily experiences. Planning approaches had recently been reviewed and responsive planning approaches were in the early stages. For example, staff were beginning to use floor books which evidenced that play experiences on offer reflected children's current interests. We agreed that the service should continue to develop and embed an effective planning cycle that clearly evidences children's voices. We advised that clear recording of strategies to support children to achieve their learning targets would ensure that children are further supported to reach their full potential.

There were some opportunities for children to build play and learn in their community. Children who attended the service during school holidays had opportunities to go to local parks, soft plays and on nature walks. The management team agreed that providing opportunities for all children to play and learn in their community during term time would be beneficial. This would support all children to develop strong links with their local community.

Areas for improvement

1. Personal plans should to be more focussed to accurately reflect how the service will meet individual children's health and well-being needs.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state "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).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a warm and welcoming environment. The playrooms were bright and well furnished with plenty of natural light. As a result, children were relaxed and happy. There were some cosy areas with comfortable chairs for children to rest. Whilst we did not observe any children sleeping during the inspection, a few children appeared to be tired. Staff told us that if children fell asleep that they would sleep on cushions on the floor. We advised the service to ensure that there was appropriate equipment for children to sleep on. This would ensure children's comfort while sleeping and support their privacy and dignity.

Exciting play spaces had been designed with plenty of real resources and loose parts. As a result, children's play and learning was supported in an environment that stimulated their curiosity and creativity. Resources indoors and outdoors were easily accessible. One parent stated, "The environment created allows freedom of choice in a safe space." This meant that children were confidently able to lead their own play. We asked the service to consider the quantity of resources in some areas of the playroom which were slightly cluttered, this could limit the value of resources and the quality of children's play in some areas. Photographs of the children, their voice and their achievements were displayed in the playrooms. This celebrated children's successes and gave them a sense of ownership of their environment.

Children benefited from daily active play and children enjoyed free flow access to large fully enclosed outdoor play spaces. This supported children's health and well-being. The outdoors space was well designed to provide children with plenty of space and a variety of different play opportunities. We observed children laughing and running, painting pictures and engaging in risky play opportunities on bikes, a rope swing and climbing large wooden reels. As a result, children were developing their physical and large motor skills whilst learning about their own limits.

The environment was clean and well-maintained. Maintenance and repair procedures were in place and children's information was stored securely in the office. Staff had a good knowledge of infection prevention and control procedures, this minimised the risk of infection and ensured that children experienced a clean and safe environment.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The management team engaged well with the inspection process. It was clear to us that the service was committed to promoting positive outcomes for children and families and had a positive outlook on change and improvement.

The service annually reviewed their vision, values and aims in collaboration with staff and families. This helped to ensure that they were representative of the current service provided. Families views were regularly gathered through questionnaires, at parent groups and electronically. We advised the service to consider ways to respond to families' feedback. This would complete the consultation cycle and ensure families continue to feel valued and included.

A joint school and early years improvement plan was in place. Staff could discuss some improvement priorities that were reflected in practice such as raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff were not familiar with all of the current improvement priorities and it was not always clear in the joint improvement plan which improvement priorities were relevant to the early years class. We suggested considering ways to clearly share the improvement priorities specific to the early years class with staff. This should include clear actions, areas of responsibility and timescales. This would support early years staff and management in their improvement journey by ensuring improvement actions are clear, manageable and progress is monitored.

Most early years staff felt included in self-evaluation processes. Staff individually evaluated different aspects of the service regularly against quality indicators outlined in the Education Scotland self-evaluation framework, 'How good is our early learning and childcare.' These were collated by the early years manager to provide an overview of strengths, evidence and potential areas of development. We saw evidence that some areas for improvement suggested by staff had been implemented, such as, providing Makaton training and introducing a system to praise staff and celebrate their achievements. Due to the volume of self-evaluation gathered, some staff felt that their opinions were listened to while others did not. We suggested considering ways to streamline the self-evaluation process collaboratively as a team. This would help to ensure that self-evaluation is meaningful and all staff feel listened to.

Monitoring and auditing systems were in place and were mostly effective. We found some gaps in the recording of information where actions had been identified but had not been followed up. We discussed the benefit of ensuring robust monitoring of quality assurance systems. This would support the management team to ensure consistent quality.

Staff had regular training opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills. All staff had leadership roles to support improvement. Staff spoke passionately about their leadership roles and we saw the positive impact of these reflected in practice, particularly in relation to parental engagement, communication, numeracy and literacy. As a result, staff were enabled to develop their leadership skills and support positive outcomes for children and families.

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff worked well together in the playrooms. They communicated respectfully, supporting each other when required. This created a warm and friendly atmosphere for children. One parent told us, 'The staff couldn't be any nicer on a daily basis.' Staff communicated well to ensure children were accounted for at all times. Whilst staff were aware of children's whereabouts, at times they did not adjust their deployment effectively when large numbers of children moved from indoors to outdoors. The service should ensure that staffing levels outdoors are appropriate to ensure children's safety and do not limit their play experiences.

Staff deployment was not always sufficient to ensure quality experiences for all children. Staff cover was not provided when children required personal care, as a result children in the 2-3 playroom were all moved between indoors and outdoors each time a child required personal care. This meant that children's play was regularly interrupted and movement between outdoors and indoors was restricted. This resulted in missed opportunities for some children to deeply engage in play and learning opportunities.

Staff breaks were not always planned effectively. As a result, young children did not always receive support from familiar staff. During lunchtime, some staff attempted to comfort, support and closely supervise large numbers of young children at a time where there are additional risks such as choking. Additional or familiar staff at mealtimes would ensure all children experience meaningful engagement and that their needs are met at the right time.

Most staff told us that they did not feel professionally supported by the management team in the playrooms, particularly during periods of staff breaks or unplanned staff absences. Most staff told us that they did not have opportunities to meet as a team and the majority of the staff told us they did not have regular individual support or supervision from their manager. As a result, staff morale was low. The staff team would benefit from the management team being more visible in playrooms to role model best practice and provide support when required. The service should also ensure that staff have regular opportunities to meet with management individually and as a team to discuss their achievements and challenges. This would ensure that all staff feel valued and professionally supported. All staff were passionate about providing a quality service for children and families. Management recognised that improvements in staff deployment were necessary to support staff well-being and to ensure all children's needs are consistently met across the day (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. The service should ensure there are sufficient numbers of staff to meet the individual needs of children across the day. To do this, they should at a minimum ensure that sufficient cover is provided when staff are engaged in tasks such as personal care and mealtimes, and during staff breaks.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15) and 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 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?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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