

Gullane Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 June 2024

Service provided by:
East Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002600

Service no:
CS2003016984

About the service

Gullane Primary School Nursery is provided by East Lothian Council. The service moved to new purpose-built premises which were developed as part of the whole school expansion, operating the 48-week model. The nursery is an integrated part of the school.

The nursery premises consists of one large playroom which has direct access to the outdoor area, a cloakroom and toilet facilities. The school is close to local amenities, such as, shops, parks, and beaches.

The service is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 48 children aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time.

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 that took place on 18 June between 9:30 and 17:30.

We provided feedback to the service on 27 June 2024 between 13:00 and 14:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and some of their family members
- considered feedback from fifteen families through an online form
- spoke with staff and received eight online questionnaires from staff
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and the management of the service.

Key messages

- Children benefited from warm and nurturing care from the staff team.
- Children were confident, could lead their own play and follow their interests with a range of stimulating play experiences.
- The lunch time experience for children required further improvement.
- Children benefitted from access to stimulating outdoor play spaces, supporting their health and wellbeing.
- Robust quality assurance practices were in place and supported continuous 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches from staff which resulted in positive relationships being established. Staff were in tune with children and their needs. They noticed children's cues, and provided sensitive support. Comfort and reassurance were given when needed, which supported children to feel settled and secure.

Children were encouraged to identify and express their emotions through feelings resources. For example, story books, colour monsters and animals, which supported children's understanding about feelings, as they associated feelings and emotions with colours. In addition, the beehive, a natural willow den in the playroom, offered children a quiet, calm space to self-regulate their emotions, away from the bustle of the playroom activity. Children were aware and able to describe the rules within the setting, such as, we walk indoors, knowing these helped to keep them safe. Staff listened to children and their positive body language and facial expressions supported children to be heard and understood. This created a supportive nurturing environment for children to thrive in. One family told us, "The range of stories and discussion about what the meaning of stories and emotions are within them, is something that is brought home."

Children's transitions were important and were supported in a number of ways. For example, the service worked in partnership with families to settle children into the service at their own pace. Children were supported to prepare for transitions between play and daily routines, such as snack time. Whilst children transitioning to school were supported through a detailed transition plan and varied activities. For example, children benefited from, regular visits to the classroom and seeing their teacher, they had buddies with primary six children, and participated in school assemblies and events. This contributed to children's overall wellbeing which helped them to feel prepared and supported during this significant transition. One family told us, "The nursery has consciously made an effort to ensure my child is becoming increasingly familiar with the school setting which has been wonderful - I can't see there being any issues when they move there after the summer. My child is so confident in moving about the school, knowing where various rooms are, and mixing with the older children".

Personal plans had been reviewed and updated alongside families. Staff gathered information which helped support children's individual needs and monitor their care, learning and development. Medical care plans were updated as required to support the ongoing needs of some children. Staff could confidently talk about children's individual needs, likes, dislikes and interests. They were aware of children's characters and personalities. Families told us, "Staff know my child very well and are very flexible to accommodate their needs to ensure they settled in well and continue to develop", and "The staff who care for my child have made such a significant difference to their development".

Snack time was a relaxed sociable experience for children. The well organised area encouraged children's independence. Staff engaged with children at snack time and supported sociable interactions, role modelling and assistance when needed. We discussed the lunch time routine, where the seating plan did not allow staff to sit with children to provide support and encouragement. There was no independence for children as all food and water was served to them.

The dining hall became very noisy and for some children lunch was hurried. The service should review children's lunch time, to ensure that children's independence is encouraged. The routines and timings are responsive to children's needs and support an unhurried experience (**see area for improvement 1**).

No children slept or required a nap as part of their daily routine on the day of the inspection. However, with the extended hours, some children are cared for prolonged periods in the service within a day. To support children's health and wellbeing the service should consider the availability of quiet, homely comfortable spaces, with appropriate bedding should children require to sleep.

Medication was stored securely and administered in accordance with best practice. Appropriate systems for recording children's medication were in place, such as parental consent forms, flow charts, storage information and administration records. As a result, children were kept safe and well. Children's safety and wellbeing was supported as staff had a clear understanding of their responsibilities in safeguarding children.

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 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy, fully engaged and focused on their play throughout the inspection. A very good range of developmentally appropriate play experiences and resources were on offer, both indoors and outdoors. These supported children to extend and follow their own ideas.

The outdoor area was extremely popular with children. They were happy, having fun and developing their social skills whilst sharing, working together, and negotiating with each other. For example, children favoured and were busy in the sand area, they also enjoyed the mud kitchen, making soup, cakes, and coffee. Children were risk taking and developing their resilience, as they climbed up the hill and pushed large trucks and vehicles down again. Staff supervised these experiences well. As a result, outdoor play supported children's wellbeing and created opportunities for them to develop their physical strength, coordination, and balance.

Staff provided some opportunities for children to communicate and develop their language skills. This could be further developed to allow all staff to effectively use questioning to extend and support children's ideas and learning. Supporting children to share their thoughts and ideas would provide a deeper learning experience and build children's confidence. Staff shared children's achievements and learning intentions with families through learning journals and newsletters. Families had opportunities to discuss and share children's learning, and developmental needs during consultations and regular learning conversations. As a result, families were included, and valued as active participants in their child's learning and achievements.

Families' comments included, "My child absolutely loves the garden, they are given every opportunity to play out there, with the very varied activities available. When inside they happily move around activities and play areas. My child is able to follow their interests and always talks about a very wide range of activities and experiences" and "My child enjoys a range of activities in nursery from drawing to experimenting with colour, tasting cultural foods to making/baking goods associated with different occasions or times of the year. They enjoy yoga and games in the school gym hall and dancing at the end of the day. My child is taught about wider issues such as the need to recycle waste. They are also aware of the rights of the child".

We discussed gender equal practices with staff and management, to support and encourage this practice further within the service.

This will help to eliminate traditional gender stereotyping and roles within songs and rhymes and encourage diversity. We signposted the service to Care Inspectorate practice document, 'Gender equal play in early learning and childcare'. This can be found at, <https://hub.careinspectorate.com>

Areas for improvement

1.

To promote positive mealtime experiences for children, staff should create a positive environment. They should review the current lunchtime routine and seating plan, to provide support and encouragement to younger children and a relaxed unhurried experience. This would help ensure that the routine and timings were responsive to children's needs and support an unhurried experience.

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

'If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected' (HSCS 1.33).

'I can enjoy unhurried snacks and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35)

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 key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children and families benefited from an environment that was well furnished, stimulating and inviting. There was a welcoming entrance area, which displayed photographs, children's learning, and a range of informative information. Families were greeted on arrival which provided opportunities for conversations and sharing of information, about children's day, routines, and needs. Children were able to access the cloakroom where they had their own space to store their personal items. They were confidently going back and forward to collect items, put items away and swap their shoes. This promoted a strong sense of belonging.

Children experienced a welcoming environment with plenty of natural light and good ventilation. All areas were clean, tidy, well organised and maintained, for children to play, learn and relax. The environment was very well thought out and planned to maximise children's play and learning experiences. Children benefited from a particularly good range of open ended, natural child centred resources, enabling them to explore their creativity, and imagination. Families commented, "The environment is welcoming, child friendly and accessible for the children e.g. self-registration, using emotion boxes and the cloak room area. It also feels like a safe space with entry system and locked gate into the nursery room. The outdoor space is also outstanding" and "Gullane nursery is a warm, welcoming, and nurturing environment that feels friendly from the moment you walk through the door! My child has the choice of a wide range of engaging activities there".

Furniture and resources were of high quality and appropriate for the children using the setting. Careful consideration had been given to the layout of the room to offer spaces for children to make choices, support their interests and develop their ideas. The attention to detail within the spaces was evident and you could easily see children's interests reflected in the resources and play spaces. As a result, children were engaged in their play, being creative, following their own ideas and were happy.

Children had access to a wide range of opportunities and play experiences to develop their curiosity, imagination and to problem solve. For example, a child decided to be a wizard, they made a spell book and a magic wand of which they were immensely proud. Staff encouraged them to share their ideas with other children who were interested. Consequently they were being creative, empowered and developing their confidence.

Children's photos, artwork and special items were displayed throughout the environment. This supported them to make connections, and to reflect on their achievements. The effect of this was children felt comfortable and important. This promoted opportunities for conversations as children reflected on their learning in turn supporting their language and communication development.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place throughout the service to protect children's health and wellbeing. For example, children were reminded and supported to wash their hands and brush their teeth at appropriate times. Toilet, nappy changing and hand washing facilities were clean and well maintained. Staff used posters and conversation to reinforce the importance of good hand hygiene to prevent the spread of germs that might make children unwell. Children independently washed their hands throughout the day. One child explained to us, "We wash our hands, brush our teeth after lunch and have time to play". As a result, children were kept safe and were learning good hygiene habits.

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

The staff and leadership team were enthusiastic and committed to providing a high quality service for children and their families. They had developed a strong ethos of continuous improvement which led to positive outcomes for all.

It was evident that the service was aware of the importance of making strong connections and developing meaningful relationships with children and their families. The service informed us, they were keen to enhance and further develop family engagement to ensure they meet the needs, wishes' and choices of children and their families. The service outlined the importance of children in the nursery being valued members of the school. One family told us, "I have a very strong connection with staff and I feel able to communicate openly. They have great communication with parents. My child is very happy at nursery which makes me very happy and comfortable to leave them in the nursery with excellent care and skilled staff".

The staff were working to implement a rights-based approach into their everyday practice, this was linked to the service's improvement plans. They gained a silver Rights Respecting School, award for their work aligned with the principles of the UNCRC and children's rights. This led to, a child centred approach, within the service, which promoted respect, and prioritized the wellbeing and rights of the children.

The service had a clear commitment to improving outcomes for children and their families. They recognised the importance of involving children and their families in the evaluation process. It was evident they were consulted, and their views, thoughts and ideas were valued and responded to. For example, families had recently been consulted about the end of term celebrations for their children. Children's voice was evident within their learning journals, floorbooks and planning. Within our online survey, families confirmed, they were regularly asked and involved in changes and their opinions were valued.

Quality assurance processes were in place, which included a clear improvement plan with realistic targets to support progress. The service had created and launched a family friendly version, which had been shared with families via group call and a visual display. This allowed families to comment on the plan and involved them in the process.

There was a shared responsibility for improvement as the whole staff team engaged in the ongoing improvement of the service, this meant staff understood the role they played in supporting improvements to children's care, play and learning. Within our online survey, staff agreed, they were fully involved in the self-evaluation of the service. Staff told us, "I love working at Gullane, the staff team are incredible, hardworking and really put the children & families at the heart of everything they do, I am proud to be a part of that".

The leadership team and the staff engaged well during the inspection process, providing additional evidence, and taking on advice and support, which demonstrated their commitment to improvement.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff interactions with children were kind, caring and genuine. They knew children well and could confidently talk about them as individuals, describing any support they needed. One family commented, "All staff are amazing, making sure I'm happy about everything that is happening and really keeping me in the loop with everything to do with my child."

The service had a clear management structure, with the school head teacher as the registered manager, the depute taking responsibility for the early level and a senior supporting day to day running of the service, including support for staff. The management team valued staff and were committed to ensuring they were supported to carry out their role effectively.

Staff work well as a team. They were aware of their roles, communicated with each other respectfully, and were flexible to support each other. This modelled the services ethos of respect, which promoted a positive atmosphere for everyone. Within our online survey, staff told us, "Our senior is phenomenal, I know I can go to them, or any of our leaders for help, support or guidance. Our whole team is very supportive of each other" and "I feel fully supported by my manager and the other members of the team on anything that has upset me or times I have felt unsure".

Staff deployed themselves across the spaces between indoors and outdoors throughout the inspection to best support children's needs. However, staff deployment during lunch time was not effective. Staff sat back or stood near children, rather than sitting with children.

Moving forward, the service should consider the importance of staff deployment during lunch time to ensure children were supported and encouraged during the lunch experience. The leadership team were receptive to this feedback and recognised that this was an area of practice that could be strengthened. This would promote consistency across the service and continue to support all children to have a quality lunch time experience.

Staff participated in morning huddles to support them to plan for the day and ensure that they were familiar with the daily tasks. Staff had awareness that communication is key, in caring for children. A communication folder supported staff with different shift patterns and in sharing of information. Staff told us there is a culture of positive communication. Families commented, "The staff at this setting are incredibly approachable and professional. Each understands my child's personality and needs, and we feel a lot of nurturing in our daily interactions with them".

New staff were undertaking meaningful inductions into the setting. This included opportunities for reflection using discussion and questionnaires with their mentor. This supported them to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding required to support and care for children. Staff confirmed within online feedback, "The staff are very helpful from centre manager to practitioners. Always willing to help and guide you. Nothing is ever a bother with the staff, very approachable" and "All staff members have fully supported me in my induction. I was told where to find all our policy and procedures to read and I was shown around the room and introduced to all staff and children". This meant children were being cared for by staff who understood their roles and responsibilities and whose practice was underpinned by relevant guidance and best practice.

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	5 - Very Good
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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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