

South Lodge Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

South Lodge Primary School
Castle Road
Invergordon
IV18 0LW

Telephone: 01349 852 521

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 August 2024

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017267

About the service

South Lodge Primary School Nursery is operated by The Highland Council and is based in the grounds of South Lodge Primary School, Invergordon. South Lodge Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care service to a maximum of 40 children aged 3 years to those not yet of an age to attend primary school.

The accommodation provided is within two main rooms with access to a spacious outdoor play area. The outdoor play area contains a range of loose parts and open ended resources which extend and enrich the children's imaginative play and learning experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 and 29 August 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and children's experiences;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from five families;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from five staff members;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and having fun.
- Staff were very nurturing and caring towards children, who they knew well.
- The service had a very good knowledge of each individual child's needs and a plan in place to support their health, safety and wellbeing.
- The service should revisit their planning approaches and the recording of observations to ensure they are child centred and responsive to children's current interests.
- Thoughtfully resourced outdoor facilities offered children opportunities for learning through play.
- To support continuous improvement the service should ensure that staff are monitored effectively.
- To effectively manage the service, the provider should ensure that the manager allocates time each week to effectively manage and lead the care service provided.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Children were happy and settled within the service. Throughout the nursery, staff used warm and caring interactions to provide a good level of nurturing care. Staff praised and encouraged children to make them feel safe and secure.

Children were warmly welcomed when they arrived at nursery, helping them feel loved and cared for. Staff took time to speak with parents when arriving at the nursery with their child. This helped ensure relevant information was passed on to meet children's needs and took account of changes to their routine.

Personal planning was not consistently effective in recording strategies to ensure children's health and wellbeing needs were being met. We spoke with the manager about developing these further along with chronologies, to make improvements and clearly identify support strategies in place for these children. As a result, not all children were being effectively supported to reach their full potential. **(See area for improvement 1).**

Mealtimes were a relaxed and unhurried experience for children. They benefitted from healthy nutritious food choices. Where appropriate, the snack time experience offered children opportunities to develop independence and social skills. For example, children, poured their own drinks, served their food, and cleared their plates. Staff sat with children and chatted which resulted in a relaxed, social, and supervised lunch experience. However, during the lunchtime experience children had less opportunity to be independent as the food and drinks were served by the staff to the children. Management agreed to revisit the lunchtime experience and offer children more opportunities to be independent.

Long-term medication was mainly stored and managed effectively. Medication processes did not always support children to be safe and healthy as paperwork did not always gather the required information to ensure effective management of medications. The manager now needs to implement effective auditing systems to ensure medication is safely managed in the service. **(See area for improvement 1 under '3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well')**

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and protected from harm. They could confidently tell us how they would respond if they had any child protection concerns. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun and experienced a variety of play opportunities which promoted learning and development. Children enjoyed activities both indoors and out. Some favourite activities across the nursery was the home and the book corner. Children had benefitted from the introduction of some open-ended materials and loose parts. These items enabled children to develop their ideas and problem-solving skills. However, overall improvements were still needed to add to the range and quality of resources to support children to have more interesting and challenging experiences. This would support children to extend their imagination, learning and spark curiosity in their play

Staff supported children in their play, helping them to problem solve and access a variety of learning experiences. Children were supported to develop their language and numeracy skills through conversations with the staff team. We saw children having fun counting down numbers during an activity with a member of staff and using chalk for mark making in the garden.

On the day of the inspection we saw a member of staff engaging positively with children while reading a story in the cosy corner. They were all highly engaged in this activity that supported them to develop their numeracy, literacy and emotional skills. This experience contributed to children understanding the importance of recognising and reproducing words, which also builds children's vocabulary and communication skills.

We observed children's online learning journals. We saw that some observations were linked to the floor books, however, some recorded observations of learning did not always show progression or any next steps. This meant the approach did not effectively support children to reach their full potential. The service should revisit their planning approaches and the recording of observations to ensure they are child centred and responsive to children's current interests. The staff team should continue to consider how they assess children's progress, and plan to support children to reach their potential by providing challenging and meaningful experiences and clearly reflect the learning taking place. **(See area for improvement 2).**

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, development needs and progress, being effectively met, children's personal plans should be further developed and streamlined.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Plans should be reviewed and updated as children's needs, challenges and achievements change, or at least every six months in line with legislation.
- b) All staff are knowledgeable about each child's health and wellbeing needs and that tailored care and support strategies are provided and used effectively to meet those needs.

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 right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices'.
(HSCS 1.15).

2. To effectively deliver high quality play and learning experiences, the manager should support staff to access training appropriate to their role and apply the training to their practice.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) How to complete meaningful high quality observations.
- b) Reporting and recording children's progress and identifying meaningful next steps.
- c) Using best practice guidance to support high quality interactions and play experiences.

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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

Playrooms were clean, bright, and furnished with natural furniture which helped create calm and relaxing environments. Most were welcoming and inviting spaces and they all provided children with ample space to play. We saw children made good use of the space available and played happily independently or cooperatively in groups which helped them to build positive relationships with their peers and develop their social skills. Staff told us there was further scope for the indoor environment and the aim was to look at more natural resources to enhance the provision and children's experiences.

Children were enabled to rest and relax as each playroom had cosy and nurturing areas which were well accessed by the children. This resulted in children seeking out a quiet space where they could have some individual time when needed and contributed to them feeling safe.

The large outdoor areas offered a wealth of play and learning opportunities. Children's health and wellbeing was supported as they all had free flow access to the outdoors for fresh air and exercise. Children were very engaged in their play outdoors which provided rich and exciting opportunities for investigation, curiosity, and imaginary play. The garden provided a range of spaces for development of physical skills and exploration. The children had access to a variety of engaging and challenging resources and activities, for example, open-ended and natural resources, digging area, messy area and trikes. The service had identified further improvement plans for their outdoor spaces and we agreed by enhancing the opportunities for challenge, problem solving, and curiosity outdoors would engage children further in their outdoor play. This would support children to develop their problem-solving skills and spark curiosity in their play experiences.

Children were helped to stay safe as the indoors and outdoors were secured. Staff worked well together to identify and address risk within the setting and during activities, so that children enjoyed and benefited from challenge. Children were also able to manage risk and know their own limits, that helped them to build resilience.

Accidents and incidents were documented well, and parents were kept informed. We just reminded the management team to ensure audits are in place. This would allow staff to identify recurring issues and trends which then supported inform risk assessments.

Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. Staff understood the importance of keeping the setting clean and staff and children washed their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Nappy changing procedures were in line with current best practice guidance. This meant that children were protected from the potential spread of infection.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality Assurance and Improvement are Led Well

Due to the competing demands of their inspection and other school priorities, there was limited capacity and time for the head teacher to fulfil their management roles and responsibilities. The provider needs to give more managerial time for the manager to fulfil his roles and responsibilities and lead the service. The provider should review the management arrangements in place to ensure high quality experiences for children.

(See area for improvement 1).

One room leader carried out meaningful and useful quality assurance with their room and had used this information to make positive changes to the environment. Unfortunately all of these improvements had not been sustained. We discussed with the room leader the need to revisit these to ensure that improvements were sustained and built upon. They were very receptive to this input and ideas of how to take this forward, sustained and built upon. Managers should support room leaders and staff to make and sustain improvements in the environment

Self-evaluation was not yet consistently identifying examples of positive impacts on children's and families' outcomes. An effective cycle of reflection, self-evaluation and implementation of improvements had not yet been established. Self-evaluation helped staff to reflect on practice although the process was not yet fully reflecting staff, parent or children's voices. The service had identified what was going well and some actions for improvement. Some school-wide improvements had been identified in the service improvement plan. However, it was not always clear how these were being taken forward in the nursery to directly impact on children's experiences and outcomes. As a result we made an area for improvement.

(See area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To support the effective running of the service, the provider should ensure that the manager allocates time each week to effectively manage and lead the care service provided.

This is to ensure that 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).

2. To support children's wellbeing and promote the continued development and improvement of the service, the manager should ensure robust quality assurance systems are in place.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Regular opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation of practice.
- b) Regular monitoring of the quality of children's experiences and care.
- c) Auditing all children's information recorded, including accident and medication information, ensuring this corresponds between recording formats.
- d) Regular monitoring of staff practice to identify good quality skills and practice as well as training needs.

This is 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)

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

4.3 Staff Deployment

The staff team were warm and friendly, which promoted a happy and secure environment where children felt valued, loved and secure. Children benefited from a caring staff team who knew the children well. This consistency helped children develop trusting relationships with staff. Key working arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day, and ensure positive transitions for children and communication with families. This resulted in children who were settled, happy and confident. One parent told us; "I can go to the staff at anytime of the day and they are both engaging and happy to update me regularly".

Staff were welcoming and engaged in the inspection process. They were responsive to suggestions and showed a commitment to making improvements to support good outcomes for children.

Children were effectively supervised to promote their safety. There was good communication between staff and they worked together to ensure effective supervision of children across the day. They communicated well with one another when a task took them away from their responsibilities. For example, when they had to support children during lunch time period and when children required personal care.

Adult to child ratio's were being followed. We found that staff were deployed well throughout the service. They interacted well with each other, to ensure they knew their roles and responsibilities for the day. When children were outside playing, staff deployment could have been better. For example, at times, staff positioning to supervise the large space could have been better as the outdoor had different areas where the children could play in.

Staff were safely recruited and were registered with Scottish social services council (SSSC) to protect children and keep them safe from harm and abuse. Induction procedures were effective in supporting new staff to have the necessary skills and knowledge to support children. Staff told us they had been made to feel welcome by the existing staff team and they were given key personal information about children. This meant that children received the care and support that was right for them.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must ensure:

- a) personal plans are in place and implemented for all children clearly detailing how the health, welfare and safety needs of the child will be met.
- b) systems are developed to review the personal plan:
 - when requested;
 - if there are any significant changes in a child's health, welfare and safety needs;
 - at least every six months;
- c) quality assurance systems are put in place to ensure the personal plans are effectively implemented in the nursery and reviewed.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/210: Regulations 5(1)(2) - Personal Plans.

Timescale: 30 March 2018.

This requirement was made on 12 January 2018.

Action taken on previous requirement

There had been some improvements since the last inspection in January 2018 on the personal planning information, however, this has only been partly met.

Not 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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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