

Tongue Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Tongue Primary School
Lairg
IV27 4XL

Telephone: 01847 611 208

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 September 2024

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2019377765

About the service

Tongue Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 14 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time; of those 14 no more than 5 are aged 2 years to under 3 years.

Tongue Primary School Nursery is provided by The Highland Council and is based in a purpose-built nursery in the grounds of the primary school. The premises consist of a playroom with kitchen area, reception area, toilet and nappy changing facilities and an office. There is direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 3 September 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. Inspection feedback was given to the manager and provider on Thursday 5 September 2024.

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
- reviewed online questionnaires from six parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were supported with kindness, care and nurturing approaches that supported their overall wellbeing.
- Mealtimes were a positive, relaxing and sociable time for children where they were provided with a range of opportunities to develop their independence.
- Children participated in a variety of developmentally appropriate play experiences which stimulated their natural curiosity, learning and creativity.
- Improvements had been made to the playroom contributing to a more homely and comfortable environment for children.
- The service had increased their range of open ended, natural child-centred resources, enabling children to explore their creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills.
- The nursery garden offered good experiences for children to be creative in their explorative play and investigative learning.
- The manager and staff team were committed to the ongoing development of the service and improving outcomes for children.
- The manager and provider had reviewed staff deployment within the service. This meant that, the right number of staff was meeting children's individual needs, ensuring their safety.

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?	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 made an evaluation of good, for this key question. As several important strengths taken together clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were supported with kindness, care and nurturing approaches that supported their overall wellbeing. Children were happy and had developed positive attachments to staff. This contributed to a very positive ethos where children laughed, giggled and had fun. Staff were responsive to children's physical and emotional needs, helping to promote positive self-esteem, confidence and their independence. This was highlighted as a key strength by parents who told us, "My child loves going to Tongue ELC, I think that's down to the staffs' interactions with the children. It's a lovely service" and "The staff are approachable and friendly. They are welcoming to my child when he arrives in the morning, and they are engaging and warm towards him and the other children".

Overall staff spoke knowledgably and confidently about children's individual care needs and what they did to support them. We saw some examples of staff using their knowledge to support individual children. This impacted positively on their wellbeing and supported them to contribute to nursery life. Personal plans were in place; however, they did not consistently identify clear strategies of support. Whilst staff had knowledge of children's care needs, preferences and personalities, access to a more detailed personal plan would ensure a holistic view of children's needs were captured. Most parents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "I am fully involved in my child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan". However, the minority disagreed. We advised the service to develop methods to ensure all parents are fully included in their child's care.

Mealtimes were a positive, relaxing and sociable time for children where they were provided with a range of opportunities to develop their independence. For example, children poured their own milk and water and cleared away their own plates and dishes. As a result, children had opportunities to take responsibility and learn key life skills. Staff sat with children which provided opportunities to promote close attachments and develop their language skills.

Establishing good working relationships with families was a priority for the service. The manager explained that they were continuing to look at how they could improve parental engagement. There was daily communication with families, at drop off and collection time, via an online platform and there were opportunities for parents to spend time in the nursery. Most parents told us they were welcomed into the service on a regular basis. One parent commented, "They are very open to parents coming in and being involved in projects or sharing stories or just playing with the children". However, a few parents told us they were rarely welcomed into the service.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children participated in a variety of developmentally appropriate play experiences which stimulated their natural curiosity, learning and creativity. Parents highlighted this as a strength, they told us, "The staff try different activities and types of play and mix things up. I feel like my child is safe, happy and well cared for, and that [child] is learning and developing under their care".

For the majority of the time they benefitted from uninterrupted play allowing them to become absorbed and have fun, increasing their happiness and engagement levels. However, on occasion children's play and learning was interrupted to undertake adult directed activities. This was particularly evident during times of transitions. For example, before going outside and lunchtime staff became task orientated. This reduced children's engagement levels and resulted in missed opportunities to support creativity.

Planning approaches were both responsive and intentional. Staff were beginning to use provocations and invitations to play, stimulating children's thinking and curiosity. This was more evident in the home corner, where children played with everyday items which sustained their interest for prolonged periods of time, contributing to the fun they had while playing.

Staff used sensitive and well-timed interactions to support children's learning and development. We observed staff using a range of communication techniques to support children at different developmental stages. These included, using open questions to extend play and learning as well as modelling new language to support other children. This enabled children to widen their skills and consolidate their learning through play. For example, they naturally introduced mathematical language into conversation, interactions and experiences. When playing outside staff encouraged children to contrast and compare sizes and amounts when collecting sticks. This supported children's developing numeracy skills.

Some play experiences supported the development of children's language and literacy. Children were able to practice and develop their emerging writing skills through mark making with chalks. This could be further extended and developed across the indoor and outdoor environment.

Regular sharing of stories with their peers and adults ensured children had the opportunity to revisit familiar texts and consolidate their learning. This supported the development of their talking and listening skills. This good practice could be further developed to build on the way children use literacy and increase the variety of media around them.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good, for this key question. As several important strengths taken together clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The indoor playroom was clean and comfortable with plenty of natural light and ventilation. This provided a welcoming space for children and families. As part of their ongoing improvement work, the staff team had used best practice guidance to carefully consider the experiences and spaces available within the learning environment both indoors and outdoors. Homely touches and carefully considered furnishings were being introduced to the indoor environment, contributing to a more homely and comfortable environment. The service should continue to develop homely touches to create an environment that captures the feeling of warmth and cosiness.

Displays around the rooms were used to reflect children's interests and experiences. This provided opportunities for children to revisit their play and learning and share their achievements, which contributed to children's sense of pride.

The playroom was laid out in a manner which helped develop children's independence, resources were easily accessible to enable children to self-select resources of their choice. This demonstrated the value of children's ownership and autonomy within the service. Since the last inspection they had increased their range of open ended, natural child-centred resources, enabling children to explore their creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills.

The service was ideally situated to make good use of local amenities. For example, children had access to a local woodland area. This space allowed children to explore a natural environment, which provided opportunities for active, energetic play as well as providing access to fresh air. The woodland area reflected children's interests and curiosities. We saw that children were capable, confident and happy outdoors. They had great fun exploring the woods, playing with their friends. They used the natural resources in different ways which supported imaginative play. We also saw children being supported by staff to climb trees and logs, allowing them to manage and assess risk and build self-confidence.

The nursery garden also offered good experiences for children to be creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. During these experiences staff used effective questions, encouraging children to explore, test and develop ideas. For example, in the garden, children enjoyed exploring in the mud kitchen, with real life resources. One child told us they were, "making soup and coffee". This encouraged the development of gross motor skills and hand eye co-ordination.

Staff were knowledgeable about Infection Prevention and Controls procedures which minimised the potential risk of spread of infection. For example, children washed their hands at appropriate times and were encouraged to do this independently.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good, for this key question. As several important strengths taken together clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager and staff team recognised the need to review the current vision, values and aims, to reflect the aspirations of their children, families, partners and the wider community. Plans were in place to implement this review to help the service identify and understand more fully what is important for children and their families as the service moves forward.

Overall parents felt parental engagement was positive and felt involved in the development of the service; however, some parents told us they had little involvement in this and felt this could be improved. One parent commented, "I appreciate COVID-19 changed how many services work and we are still in a period of transition, but do feel more could happen to get parents more involved".

Children's voices were valued in the service. Opportunities for children to share their ideas and influence their learning was part of daily experiences. Through observations of play and daily discussions, staff responded to children's interests and suggestions. This resulted in children being empowered, valued and allowed them to drive change.

A collaborative approach towards quality assurance and improvement was a priority for the service. Some quality assurance processes ensured aspects of the service were being reviewed and monitored in a focused and meaningful way. For example, since the last inspection we noted improvements to staff deployment and the indoor environment, both of which contributed to good quality play and learning experiences for children.

Regular staff meetings and visits to nursery from the manager were supporting effective self-evaluation. The service had used best practice guidance to implement changes and review aspects of provision together which had included implementing refreshed approaches to planning children's learning and the use of the indoor and outdoor environment. Staff were encouraged to be part of the service development, contribute ideas and reflect on their practice together. This demonstrated the commitment of staff to the ongoing development of the service and improving outcomes for children. We spoke with the manager about developing opportunities for the service to look outwards and reflect on practice with colleagues from other settings to provide time for further professional dialogue and peer support.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good, for this key question. As several important strengths taken together clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them well. They recognised that continuity of care was important for children. Since the last inspection, the manager and provider had reviewed staff deployment within the service. This meant that, the right number of staff was meeting children's individual needs, ensuring their safety. Overall staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision and quality engagement with children. As a result, children benefitted from a calm and positive experience.

The ethos between team members was positive and interactions between staff were kind and respectful. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children to feel comfortable and secure in. At times, the staff team communicated well with each other when a task took them away from their designated area. However, this was not always consistent throughout the day and there were times when staff did not communicate effectively. This was more evident during times of transition. This led to gaps in interactions across the day and impacted on the quality of experiences for children.

An induction programme for all staff was in place and this contributed to staff feeling secure and happy in their work. Staff told us about the mentoring system in place and how this had contributed to developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This resulted in a motivated and enthusiastic staff team, contributing to improved outcomes for children.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 May 2024, the provider must ensure children are safe and receive high quality experiences at all times. They must as a minimum review and make appropriate changes to staff deployment to improve experiences for children.

This is to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This requirement was made on 15 March 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The provider and manager had reviewed and made appropriate changes to staff deployment. This meant children were safe and received positive experiences and interactions.

Met - within timescales

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

To enable all children to access a warm and welcoming environment, the manager and staff should review and develop the environment to make it more interesting, nurturing and homely.

This should include but is not limited to, creating comfortable area with soft furnishings where children can rest and relax.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smell' (HSCS 5.18).

This area for improvement was made on 31 March 2023.

This area for improvement was made on 31 March 2023.

Action taken since then

The manager and staff had reviewed and developed the indoor and outdoor environment to make it more interesting, nurturing and homely. As a result, the indoor playroom provided a welcoming space for children and resources provoked children's natural curiosity and imagination.

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.