

# Stromness Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Stromness Primary School  
Cairston Road  
Stromness  
KW16 3JS

Telephone: 01856 850 544

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
17 September 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Orkney Islands Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001951

**Service no:**  
CS2003016048

## About the service

Stromness Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care service to a maximum of 40 children from 2 years old to those not yet attending primary school. The service is operated by Orkney Islands Council.

Stromness Primary School Nursery is an integral part of the primary school. It comprises a large playroom and adjoining two year old base and art area. There are children's toilets and a nappy changing area accessible from the playroom. There is an enclosed outdoor play area which 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 16 and 17 September 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
- reviewed online questionnaires from 10 parents
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were very well nurtured and supported through their daily experience by kind and caring staff.
- Staff's understanding of child development, differing learning approaches and children's right to play supported the provision of high-quality experiences.
- Children benefitted from a very good range of open ended, natural child centred resources, enabling them to explore their creativity, imagination and problem solving skills.
- Children's play and learning was enhanced through strong connections to the wider community.
- Playrooms were homely and fostered a welcoming atmosphere for the children.
- The manager encouraged and motivated everyone involved in the nursery to feel confident in initiating changes.
- A shared vision across the nursery created an inclusive ethos.
- Children benefitted from a happy, caring and committed staff team who knew them well and were passionate about providing high quality care and support.

## 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? | 5 - Very Good |
| How good is our setting?                 | 5 - Very Good |
| How good is our leadership?              | 5 - Very Good |
| How good is our staff team?              | 5 - Very Good |

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

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

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing. They were happy, settled and having fun. Children were supported to make choices as staff were attuned to their routines and what was important to them. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure and, as a result, all children were confident and engaged in their play experiences.

Children's holistic wellbeing was effectively supported through good use of personal planning, which was reviewed regularly with families and children. Parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plans. One parent commented "I am fully involved and part of creating (child's) plan. I believe it to be a true working document that the staff and ourselves regularly reflect on."

Staff knew children very well and were aware of their individual needs. Effective partnerships had been formed with external agencies to help assess children's developmental needs. Children requiring additional support had individualised strategies in place, which were reflected in practice. This resulted in them being fully included in nursery experiences. This ensured positive outcomes for children and supported them to achieve their potential.

Snack and mealtimes were positive, sociable experiences. Children enjoyed eating snack and lunch together. Children's life skills were promoted during the snack process. They helped prepare snack for their peers and enjoyed this responsibility. Independence skills were being developed as children self-served and poured their own drinks. Soft touches, such as flowers placed on the table, contributed to a welcoming and homely mealtime experience. Allergies and dietary requirements were well managed, which contributed to keeping children safe.

Children and families were valued and respected. Parents were welcomed into the service to drop off and collect their children. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff, and enabled opportunities for information to be shared between nursery and home. One parent told us "All the staff at Stromness nursery are warm and welcoming. They make lots of effort to engage with parents even if they are not looking after your child as a key worker. I have no hesitations to engage with staff and share my views or concerns if I had any."

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were busy and deeply engaged in their play throughout the day. They had fun as they freely explored a wide range of experiences which provided challenge, creativity and discovery. They were well supported to communicate their wishes in a way that supported their individual needs and preferences. Staff skilfully listened to them and responded to their individual requests. This provoked children's continued interest and high levels of engagement. Staff's understanding of child development, differing learning approaches and children's right to play, supported the provision of high-quality experiences.

Children were engaged in high quality play experiences outdoors that provided a variety of opportunities to be creative, develop problem solving skills, and have fun. We observed children enjoying problem solving with large loose parts and being creative in the mud kitchen and large sand pit. The outdoor area had various exciting play opportunities for children, including a well-resourced literacy shed with materials to extend their play. As a result, children were happy and engaged in play outdoors.

Effective questioning and shared interactions from staff, encouraged children to widen their thinking and further extend their learning. Additionally, consultative planning gave them a voice and they were fully involved in the provision of daily activities. This contributed to an interesting learning environment which respected children's right to play. Children's learning and development was captured throughout planning floor books, wall displays and personal learning. Regular assessment and evaluations of children's individual learning supported planning approaches to promote continued success and individual achievement.

Children were supported to develop literacy and numeracy skills through every area of the setting and in meaningful conversations and interactions with staff. They valued the importance of good quality books and stories being available throughout all areas. Staff were creative at engaging children and followed children's interests to support the development of emerging writing skills through play. This meant children had fun as they played and made progress at a pace that was right for them.

Children's play and learning was enhanced through strong connections to the wider community. Opportunities had been developed to support intergenerational learning between the service and a local care home. This supported children to build valuable connections with members of their wider community.

## How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very 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

The staff and leadership team had worked hard to create an attractive and stimulating environment. As a result, children were offered exciting and developmentally appropriate play spaces, both indoors and outdoors.

The playrooms were well thought out and planned to maximise children's play and learning experiences. Children benefitted from a very good range of open ended, natural child centred resources, enabling them to explore their creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills. For example, children played with real ornaments and everyday items.

Playrooms were decorated in neutral colours which promoted a natural, calm environment. This fostered a welcoming atmosphere for the children. The addition of homely touches and carefully considered furnishings, supported children to feel valued and gave a strong message that they matter.

Children had opportunities to rest and relax in safe, cosy areas. Blankets and cushions were available for children to independently access. This enabled children to seek out a calm area where they could have some individual time if needed. This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Children had direct access to the outdoor garden space, giving them good opportunities for free flow play between indoors and outdoors. They moved freely between the play areas and engaged in a variety of outdoor play experiences. Children used the outdoor space with confidence and experienced enjoyment, challenge and fun. Areas to climb, run and balance outdoors provided opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills.

Staff implemented infection, prevention and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. Children were encouraged to wash hands frequently and at appropriate times. Established routines meant children were supported to be healthy.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very 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

A shared vision across the nursery created an inclusive ethos. This promoted a happy atmosphere for children to play and learn. The staff and manager were enthusiastic and committed to providing high quality experiences for children and their families. They had developed a strong ethos of continuous improvement which led to positive outcomes for everyone.

Strong leadership encouraged and motivated everyone involved in the nursery to feel confident in initiating changes. Staff were well supported to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. This led to many improvements, including changes to the environment which impacted positively on children's play and learning experiences.

The staff team regularly met informally to evaluate changes made and consider next steps. This was captured more formally in comprehensive self-evaluation documents which showed how the changes had positively impacted outcomes for children. Their reflections demonstrated they were forward thinking in identifying their improvement priorities and clear about their actions on how they would deliver these. They made very good use of best practice guidance such as, 'How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare' and 'A Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding and School Aged Childcare'. We could see this was a working document, embedded in their quality assurance processes and was having a significant impact on children's outcomes. This meant children received high quality play and learning that supported them to reach their full potential.

The service recognised the importance of involving children and families in the evaluation process. Children and families were consulted and their views, thoughts and ideas were valued and responded to. Children and their families' views informed ongoing improvements and shaped developments. The majority of parents strongly agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. This resulted in children and families feeling valued and included in the improvement journey.

**How good is our staff team?****5 - Very Good**

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

**Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment**

Children benefitted from a happy, caring and committed staff team who knew them well and were passionate about providing high quality care and support. All staff modelled respectful and caring behaviours which were reflected in how the children interacted with staff and with each other. As a result, children felt loved and valued by the people who cared for them. Parents commented: "The staff are very caring towards my child" and "The staff are all very welcoming and easy to speak to."

Effective arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day. Children received consistent, stable, and compassionate care from a staff team who were motivated and committed to providing a happy and supportive environment for children. All staff were focused on offering high quality learning experiences through play, in order to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Staff were effectively deployed to reflect their differing experience, knowledge and skills. This helped to ensure that the children's experiences were positive. They were flexible in their approach, which meant they supported each other well through routine tasks and at busy times throughout the day.

Staff undertook regular training to ensure that their skills continued to develop. There were opportunities to reflect together on training undertaken and to evaluate how it could be used to impact positively on outcomes for children. Regular staff meetings enabled all staff members to be supported and updated, contributing to a strong team ethos.

It was evident from conversations with staff that they all shared a common child-centred approach to their work and that they had been ably led and empowered by the manager to do so. One parent commented, "I am beyond impressed by Stromness Nursery and I am proud to send my daughter to the setting. It feels organised and well managed and I feel staff accommodate any additional requirements really well."

**Complaints**

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning?           | 5 - Very Good |
| 1.1 Nurturing care and support                     | 5 - Very 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?                        | 5 - Very Good |
| 4.3 Staff deployment                               | 5 - Very Good |



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