

Mounties Community Nursery Day Care of Children

Mount Cameron Primary School
Blacklaw Drive, St Leonards
East Kilbride
Glasgow
G74 2EX

Telephone: 01355 249 636

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 September 2024

Service provided by:
Mounties Community Nursery

Service provider number:
SP2003001523

Service no:
CS2003006690

About the service

Mounties Community Nursery is a daycare of children's service, registered to provide care to maximum of 27 children aged from two until those not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than five are aged two years old.

The service is located in a residential area of St Leonards, East Kilbride and is based within Mount Cameron Primary school. The service is close to local parks, shops, transport links and primary and secondary schools. At the time of the inspection, there were 18 children attending over a variety of attendance patterns.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 and 19 September 2024. We provided feedback to the management team and a representative of the local authority on 20 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 and six of their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were settled, happy and content within the nursery environment.
- Staff used kind and gentle tones when interacting with children, helping them to feel safe and secure.
- Personal plans needed to be improved to help ensure children's needs were identified and strategies outlined.
- Children enjoyed using different toys and materials to support their imagination and creativity.
- Children experienced a bright, warm and welcoming environment.
- Quality assurance systems needed to improve to ensure children's health, care and welfare needs were met.
- All staff would benefit from training relevant to their role to help build and refresh skills, knowledge and confidence.
- Staff worked well together to promote a positive atmosphere for children.

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 questions as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled and content in the nursery environment. They confidently approached staff for support, who were responsive to their cues and requests, helping them to feel valued and heard. For example, support with handwashing, during play and to resolve conflicts. Staff interacted with gentle tones that were kind and warm, helping to promote a calm and caring environment. Parents commented 'the staff are so genuine. It is clear how much they care for each and every child' and '[my child] always wants to go to nursery, to me that speaks volumes.'

Staff knew most children well and were able to describe their likes and dislikes. Personal plans were in place for each child, however, these only contained core information. For example, parents name, addresses, emergency contacts and GP details. There was limited information on children's comforters, medical information or strategies in place to support them. This included where there was allergies. Whilst we acknowledged the manager obtained allergy information quickly during the inspection, we discussed the importance of ensuring information was gathered when children started to allow staff to become familiar with them and contribute to meeting their needs (see area for improvement 1).

Children enjoyed relaxed breakfast and snack times in their playroom. Their independence was supported through an approach that meant they could eat when they were ready to, serving their own food and pouring their own drinks. Children engaged well with their peers, chatting and laughing. One child told us 'I am having my shreddies!'

Lunchtime for children took place in the school dining hall and children were familiar with this routine. Meals reflected nutritional guidance and included options that children chose from in the morning. One child told us 'I had chicken curry for lunch. It tasted good'. Some children needed some extra support during this time. For example, younger children needed help when collecting their trays and moving to a table. Older children did not always like their food being plated for them, which meant they did not always enjoy their meal. In addition, the furniture available meant children could not always sit comfortably as their feet did not always reach the floor. We discussed with management on reviewing lunchtimes to ensure children experienced a relaxed, peaceful and supportive experience.

Whilst there were no children currently on medication, we reviewed medication systems. We had no concerns around systems in place, however, we suggested some streamlining of these to ensure these were manageable and easier to complete. This included reducing the amount of duplicated paperwork.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children explored different areas of the nursery and had fun with toys and materials available to them. This included arts and crafts, water play, block play and role play. Children told us they liked 'playing outside, washing the buggies, playing on the slide, playing with friends and making things with the magnetics'.

Children spent long periods of time in the art area, exploring paint, glitter, glue and other materials, supporting their creativity. We discussed with the service on the benefits of providing malleable materials to help support children's wellbeing, fine motor skills, choices, and emotional regulation. For example, playdough. Both management and staff agreed to review this.

Children's natural curiosity and imagination was supported through role play opportunities and natural materials. For example, real tins, pots, pans and jugs in the home area. Children enjoyed exploring imaginary items such as condiments, foods and crockery to support their thinking and ideas.

Staff referred to national frameworks to support children in their learning and development. For example, 'Curriculum for Excellence' and 'Pre-birth to Three' for younger children. Whilst younger children enjoyed exploring the environment, they tended to move quickly between spaces, spending little time at any one area or engaged. We recognised this may be their stage of development, however, we discussed with management on ensuring there was the right materials and offerings of experiences for younger children to support them in their play. The manager agreed with this and shared their plans to arrange training on supporting younger children for all staff to attend.

Children's literacy and numeracy development was promoted through a variety of ways. For example, stories, songs, block play, water play and magnets. Children were engaged for periods of time building creations, shapes and structures, helping to support their problem solving. Staff showed enabling questions to support children in their thinking and further enhance their problem-solving skills.

Planning systems were in place to help ensure children had opportunities to engage in experiences that supported their progression. Whilst we observed children being responded to during their play, planning systems reflected an adult-led approach. We discussed with management on reviewing formal approaches to ensure children are able to lead their own learning, strengthening their imagination, ideas and development. We acknowledged that improving planning systems shaped one of the priorities within their improvement plan.

Children had direct access to the outdoor garden from the playroom, supporting their choices and wishes. They enjoyed exploring a variety of opportunities, such as, sand, climbing and natural materials. For example, wooden planks. Children commented 'this is our pirate ship' and another child commented 'I need this to make a plank'.

Areas for improvement

1. To help ensure children's health and wellbeing needs are met, the provider should ensure personal plans contain the relevant information and are reviewed regularly with families.

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 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, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a bright, warm and welcoming environment. Spaces were available for children to store their belongings. For example, their coats, shoes and creations they had made. Whilst children's names were present on these, we suggested the service add in children's photographs to promote a sense of belonging and to support them in identifying their name. The service began to action this before the end of the inspection.

Spaces were created to support children and some provided invitations to exploration and play. Such as, real crockery and flowers. We discussed the presentation of other items could be further enhanced, such as paper in the art and craft area, which would help ensure children could easily access these to support their play.

Children had space to move about the playroom to support their play and physical development. They could choose to lie down, sit or stand in various areas whilst they played, supporting their physical development. In addition, children could move between indoors and outdoors, choosing where to play, supporting their choices and wishes. Parents told us 'my child gets the opportunity to play outdoors every day at nursery.'

Children could hide in 'dens', which meant they had cosy spaces to play in or go into to help support their emotional development. Some other spaces could be further developed to promote a cosier and more homely feel. For example, adding more soft furnishings to the story area and the couch in the role play area.

Several safety measures were in place to help keep children safe. For example, secure entrance, enclosed garden, regular head counts and regular handwashing.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager and staff were welcoming during the inspection and were receptive to the feedback given. They were eager to make improvements and promote good outcomes for children. There had been changes to the whole team, including management and the service were in the early stages of reviewing and embedding systems to ensure children experienced a well-managed service.

An improvement plan was in place, highlighting key areas of improvement. This included reviewing the service vision, values and aims, developing spaces and planning. This was in the early stages and we agreed these areas would benefit from improvements. To support the success of these priorities and other aspects of practice, we suggested all staff revisit training relevant to their role. This would help support and shape learning, build confidence and ensure staff have the right knowledge to move forward with improvements (see area for improvement 1).

Consultations with children, families and staff took place to gather their views on strengths and areas for improvement. These helped provide opportunities for all stakeholders to share their views and feel involved in the service improvement journey. Parents commented 'there is a parents committee set up where any parent is welcome. Often nursery will ask for any feedback we have'.

Quality assurance systems were in place to help the delivery of service. For example, a quality assurance calendar, audits, and consultations with stakeholders. However, improvements were needed to these to ensure children experienced high quality care. For example, we found gaps within recruitment files, limited personal plan information and limited monitoring of staff practice. In addition, we asked the service to familiarise themselves with child protection guidance to help ensure they were aware of the reporting procedures, to ensure this was to the right person and to avoid delays in protecting children from harm (see requirement 1).

Requirements

1. By 4 November 2024 the provider must ensure robust quality assurance systems and procedures are in place to ensure children's wellbeing and safety needs are met.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure all staff access training appropriate to their role and apply their training into practice.

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 skills' (HSCS 3.14).

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.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff worked well together, communicating effectively and sharing tasks to help support effective supervision and care for children. This meant that there was a positive atmosphere for children and they were supported during their play. Parents commented 'the staff are extremely kind, caring and nurturing' and 'my [child] loves the staff as do I. Any issues I have raised with staff I feel were dealt with well and I feel I could go in and speak to them anytime'.

Staff had developed positive relationships with children and families, helping to develop and sustain positive connections. This was further enhanced by parents entering the playroom to collect their children. Parents told us 'all staff are very welcoming and friendly any questions are answered' and 'staff have been helpful and very approachable'.

Staff were deployed in a way that meant children could mostly choose where to play, either inside or outside. This promoted children's independence and choices. Whilst most daily routines were relaxed, we suggested the manager continually review routines to help ensure these are supportive of children's individual needs. This would help reduce any potential interruptions to children's play.

There was a mix of staff skills and knowledge across the setting. Staff balanced this across their deployment to help ensure children were supervised and supported well. The manager shared there was no official systems in place for mentoring new staff or students, although provided assurances support was given. We suggested the manager develop mentoring systems to support staff in their role and signposted the manager to the 'National Induction Resource' as a supportive tool.

Staff breaks were organised well and these had limited impact on children and their daily experiences. Some staff were mindful to tell children what was happening and where they were going, keeping children informed. This was particularly beneficial when staff were engaged with children during their play.

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	4 - Good
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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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