

Mid Yell Junior High Nursery School Day Care of Children

Mid Yell Junior High School
Mid Yell
Shetland
ZE2 9BN

Telephone: 01595 745 050

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 September 2024

Service provided by:
Shetland Islands Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002063

Service no:
CS2003016117

About the service

Mid Yell Junior High Nursery School is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 22 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than ten are aged two years to under three years.

The service operates from a purpose built nursery within the Mid Yell Junior High School. Located in the village of Mid Yell, on the island of Yell, which is situated to the north of mainland Shetland. The children have direct access from the playroom to an enclosed outdoor play area and are close to the leisure centre and play park.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 and 24 September 2024 between 09:00 and 16:00. 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, 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 five of their parents/carers
- Received five parent questionnaires
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily experiences
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing care from staff which helped them feel happy, secure and safe.
- Children were having fun leading their own play and learning.
- Children's health and wellbeing was enhanced through daily access to outdoor play.
- To ensure children's safety, improvements should be made to the security of the building.
- Effective leadership supported a culture of continued reflection and improvement.
- Children benefited from an experienced staff team who worked effectively together.

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?	4 - 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 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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were supported with kindness, respect and nurturing approaches that supported their overall wellbeing. Settling in visits were tailored to meet the individual needs of the children. Staff responded sensitively to children's cues and emotions, providing cuddles and one to one support when required. These interactions supported the development of children's confidence and positive attachments. As a result, children felt loved, safe and secure.

Children and their families were warmly welcomed, helping to build positive and trusting relationships. Parents were kept informed through discussion at drop-off and pick-up times and information shared through a closed social media page. This supported working together and a continuity of care. A parent commented, 'They are good at giving us feedback on our child to put our minds at rest and put us at ease. I know we can 100% trust them to care for our child.'

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning. Staff knew children very well and were responsive to their changing needs. Each child's personal plan was created in collaboration with families and where relevant, with supporting professionals to promote continuity of care. Effective use of chronologies and regular review of individual personal plans, aided staff in providing care and support to meet children's individual needs.

Lunch was a relaxed, unhurried, and sociable, with all children coming together for the experience. Children's life skills were promoted as they enjoyed the responsibility of setting the table for their peers at lunchtime. Independence skills were developed as children self-served, poured their own drinks and loaded the dishwasher. Staff sat with children at each of the tables and ate their meals alongside them. This enabled opportunities for language development and ensured children were supported well and kept safe when eating.

Children's personal care needs were carried out discreetly and sensitively, supporting their privacy and dignity. Staff used these opportunities to further build positive trusting relationships with children.

Children's safety and wellbeing were promoted as staff showed a good understanding in their role of identifying, recording and referring any safeguarding concerns. Staff attended regular child protection training, and a policy was in place to further support staff in the processes should they identify a concern. This meant children and their families were provided with the support and help they needed.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy, engaged and actively led their play and learning throughout the day. They experienced uninterrupted play for most of the day, which enabled them to become focused and engaged in their play experiences. Parents commented positively on children's play and learning and told us, 'The experiences in the nursery are ever changing and developing.' 'They find ways to work learning into the play activities.' 'The experiences they provide are well thought out, planned, varied and exciting.'

Staff were responsive to children's requests in their play and intervened at appropriate times. This contributed to children feeling valued and having the ability to lead their own learning by following their interests. Staff interactions extended and developed children's individual learning. For example, children's interest in maps was supported through skilful questioning. This extended learning and promoted a sense of belonging.

Children's learning, achievements and next steps to support further learning were recorded in learning story books with supporting photographs. We discussed ways in which the recording of learning observations could be improved. For example, to ensure skills and learning were consistently recorded. The manager agreed this was an area of ongoing development.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interests and life experiences. For example, the children had recently baked cakes and won first prize in a local competition. Floor books captured children's contributions to planning activities and demonstrated that their thoughts and views were valued and listened to. Tracking and monitoring systems were in place to identify gaps in learning and introduce targeted support or provide further challenge where needed. As a result, children were progressing well.

Children had direct access to the outdoor garden space, giving them good opportunities for free flow play between indoors and outdoors. Children were excited and engaged as they splashed in puddles, made soup in the mud kitchen and planted flowers in containers. A child said, 'I'm feeling happy.' Children could choose to play outdoors in all weathers. This supported children to be active and healthy. A parent commented, 'My child loves being outside, and they have the opportunity to do this every day.'

Opportunities for emerging language, literacy and numeracy were naturally woven into daily experiences. For example, children self-registered, counted and recorded the number of children in the setting. They used money at snack time and measured when building towers. Children enjoyed sharing books, rhymes and songs with staff in an engaging way. These provided meaningful learning opportunities for children.

Opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through strong connections and visits to local amenities. These included trips to the library, shop, local park and natural spaces. This supported children to feel part of their community.

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.

Children experienced a setting that was comfortable, bright and inviting. Good quality furniture and accessible resources supported children's choice and independence. The layout of spaces had been well considered and thought out to meet children's needs and ensure they could explore and learn comfortably. Play spaces were attractive and supported children's age and stage of development. Children had fun playing in the role play area, water tray and constructing with wooden blocks. These resources offered opportunities to develop their imagination and problem solving skills.

Children took pride in their playroom as they helped to care for and clear away resources when they were no longer in use. Staff also reset areas to ensure that they were inviting to children. This meant children and

staff respected the environment and sent a message to children that they matter. A parent commented, 'I really love how calm and organised the environment is.'

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by daily access to the enclosed outdoor area. This allowed children to run, climb, and dig in the sand pit. Some open-ended natural materials were on offer to develop imagination and creativity. The service had identified further improvement plans for their outdoor space. We signposted the manager to guidance documents 'My World Outdoors' and 'Space to Grow and Thrive' on the Care Inspectorate Hub to support future development.

Staff implemented infection, prevention and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. The setting was clean, and hand washing was well supported at appropriate times, such as before and after eating, after toileting and personal care. This helped keep children safe and well.

Risk assessments were in place for indoor and outdoor environments to support the safety and wellbeing of the children. These documented potential risks and mitigations in place. Staff worked together to ensure children were accounted for throughout the day. However, the setting did not have a secure entry system. This meant there was the potential for unauthorised persons to access the building which compromised children's safety (**see area for improvement 1**).

Children's safety, emotional security and wellbeing were supported through sensitive arrangements for rest and relaxation. Staff supported children in the quiet area, and other areas of the playroom, as they enjoyed stories and relaxed on the soft seating and cushions. The quiet area provided a space for children to rest and sleep if required.

Children's personal information was stored securely in a lockable cabinet and any digital information was password sensitive. This ensured families privacy and confidentiality.

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe the provider should ensure the setting has a safe and secure entry system.

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

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

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.

The values and aims of the service were positive and were shared by the team. These were reflected in practice and in our discussions with staff. The service 'ISLAND' values were 'inclusive, supportive, learning, aspirational, nurturing and developing.' These supported staff and families to understand what to expect from the service.

The importance of using the views of parents and children to inform the planning and development of the service was recognised. Children and families' views were actively sought through questionnaires and face to face discussions. Families we received feedback from, agreed that they influenced change within the setting. One parent commented, 'They ask for our views and suggestions, they are so approachable it is easy

to do this.' Another parent said, 'The nursery introduced a question of the month, encouraging everyone to give their thoughts and feedback regularly.' This led to positive relationships and partnership working to promote positive outcomes for children.

Strong leadership within the service promoted a culture of continuous improvement. Parents and staff commented on the supportive, approachable and visible leadership within the setting. This meant staff felt well supported and confident in their roles.

Self-evaluation was used to identify where improvements could be made. Staff were kept informed of new initiatives and asked for suggestions during regular team meetings. These were reflected in the service improvement plan which focused on key areas such as developing the outdoor learning environment for children. Previous priorities had led to improved outcomes for children and families. These included improvements in the environment, numeracy provision and toddler group visits to support transition.

Quality assurance processes were in place and included regular audits of medication, personal plans, accidents and incidents and monitoring of the environment. These helped keep children safe and well.

How good is our staff team?

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.

Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff who were committed to their role. Staff worked well together to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for children to support the shared vision and a positive working ethos. Parents described the staff team as 'lovely' 'helpful' and 'amazing.' Parent comments included, 'The staff are fantastic, and the service provided is brilliant. My child loves it there and is thriving.' 'All staff are friendly, approachable and kind. They always make time to listen to you. Staff are guaranteed to meet you warmly every morning.' 'Mid Yell Nursery is like a family.'

Regular meetings gave staff opportunities to talk about achievements and discuss any individual children's needs or next steps. Staff undertook regular training to ensure that their skills continued to develop. They reflected together on training undertaken and evaluated how it could be used to impact positively on outcomes for children. This resulted in a positive ethos across the team, which supported children to reach their full potential.

Staff breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children while enabling staff time to rest and be refreshed. This meant that continuity of care throughout the day was managed well to ensure high levels of interaction and support for children.

Staff showed a very good awareness of what was happening within the room and where children may need extra support. They were flexible in their approach and communicated well to ensure that adequate support and supervision of children promoted their safety and wellbeing. Staff treated each other with consideration and respect, this provided positive role modelling and a relaxed and happy atmosphere for children to enjoy.

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

It is recommended that staff review all care plans. These should contain all relevant information pertaining to the child's individual health and wellbeing needs and reflect where the child is at now and what support is needed.

Reference: National care standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 3: health and wellbeing; standard 4: engaging with children.

This area for improvement was made on 3 October 2017.

Action taken since then

All children had a personal plan. Key information was gathered in partnership with families and was used effectively to help staff provide individualised care. Staff were knowledgeable about each child's needs and strategies in place to support them. Plans were regularly reviewed and updated with families to ensure children were receiving care which met their current needs.

This area for improvement has been 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?	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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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