

Baird Memorial Primary School Early Years Support Unit Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003016810

About the service

Baird Memorial Primary School Early Years Support Unit is registered to provide care to a maximum of 40 children aged three years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. The manager is also the head teacher of Condorrat Primary School and Nursery Class.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for across three playrooms and also have opportunities to access many other areas in the setting, including a sensory room, hub, school grounds and an enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 11 November 2024 between 09:20 and 16:50, Wednesday 12 November 2024 between 08:45 and 14:00 and Thursday 14 November 2024 between 10:45 and 12:50. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 and observed children using the service
- Spoke with four family members of children attending the service
- Spoke with 16 staff and the senior leadership team
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with visiting professionals

Key messages

- Children were safe, happy and settled in their nursery.
- Children experienced personalised, nurturing care from adults that knew them very well.
- Language and communication strategies and skilled staff supported children to influence how they spent their time in nursery.
- Playrooms were nurturing, cosy spaces where children felt emotionally secure.
- The service was led by a strong leader who had a clear vision and high expectations. Staff felt valued, empowered and supported to develop professionally. They were confident in their abilities to support children and their families.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

1.1: Nurturing care and support

A key strength of this service was the loving, caring and nurturing approaches used by staff to support children. Staff had children's best interests at heart and held them at the centre of their work. Children felt loved, valued and staff were very well attuned to their needs.

Each child had a key worker who was responsible for their care and wellbeing. This relationship helped children to settle and feel safe in the setting. Long term staff provided consistency of care for children which is important for their overall wellbeing.

Children's wellbeing was supported well through personal planning. Staff knew the children in their care very well and confidently told us about how they supported their individual health and development needs. Information recorded about children's families, medical needs and interests helped staff to provide personalised care and support. Plans demonstrated how children were being supported to achieve their potential. A parent/carer commented, "my child's progress came on 10 fold when they entered the service. They always come home full of smiles and laughter. They love their time there. They are more outgoing and their confidence has grown so much. They can focus on a task longer than before they entered the service."

Children were treated with respect and interactions were respectful and sensitive. They had opportunities to make choices and influence how they spent their time in the service. Communication strategies such as touch pads, objects of reference, Makaton and visual props supported children to interact and communicate their wishes. Staff had attended a wide range of training to develop their knowledge of communication strategies and placed great importance on this.

Parents/carers had meaningful opportunities to be involved in their child's care. For example, they had regular opportunities to meet with staff to review plans and engage with their child's online learning journals. Stay and Play sessions, social events and parent/carer support programmes meant that they could attend the service and observe their child at play. This helped develop positive relationships and effective partnership working. Parents/carers spoke very highly about the communication methods used by the service.

Staff worked very effectively with a range of external professional agencies to support children. We spoke with many visiting professionals during our visit. They spoke very highly of welcoming and skilled staff who were keen to learn and develop their knowledge, to ensure they were getting it right for each child. Shared strategies and approaches were used consistently and we observed staff working very effectively together with other professionals to support children's needs. Staff told us, "The children's level of care has stayed at the high standard as always. Staff work very hard to ensure each child's needs are met by working with outside agencies and parents."

Medication was administered safely and sensitively. Staff had undergone a wide range of training to ensure children were well supported. Medication was stored appropriately and record keeping was completed appropriately.

Mealtimes were very relaxed and sociable experiences. Children benefited from eating together in their familiar playroom. Staff were very well organised and focused on the children to provide support and ensure their safety. Children had access to drinks, ensuring they were kept hydrated throughout the day.

Children were safe and protected from harm. Staff clearly understood the role they played in this and undertook annual refresher child protection training. Recently appointed staff were supported to understand their role as part of their induction. The management team understood their responsibilities and the systems that were in place to report any concerns.

1.3: Play and Learning

Children enjoyed their time at nursery and were engaged in their play activities. Staff made activities fun and incorporated humour in their interactions. We could see from the children's responses that they were happy and having fun.

Staff supported children to make choices about their play and were responsive to their cues. Children had lots of time to play and staff had good knowledge of their interests and ensured activities and resources reflected these. Staff interacted enthusiastically in their play, supporting them to explore, be creative and develop their curiosity. We observed lots of singing and storytelling which supports early literacy. A parent/carer commented, "my child's complex needs are met by staff who know the right activities for their level of enjoyment/understanding. They get lots of opportunities to be outdoors and have sensory experiences."

There was a good balance of planned and adult led play experiences. Play resources were reflective of children's stage of development. Children had lots of opportunities for sensory play, with water, sand, playdough and natural resources freely available. These experiences supported children to learn through exploration, curiosity and creativity and supported emotional self-regulation. A parent/carer commented that they liked their child's "sensory experiences. They are always included and activities are adapted to suit needs."

Children's learning and development was further supported by the opportunities to engage in their local and wider community. The service had their own bus which meant that children could be transported safely to interesting and exciting places including playparks and cafes. This helped enrich children's learning and helped them develop positive links with their community.

The service had further developed their approach to planning which was now embedded in practice. This process demonstrated how children's individual needs were being planned for and how their play experiences were supporting them to achieve. The senior leadership team and staff had made good progress in developing systems to track and monitor children's development more effectively.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was comfortable, light, well ventilated and maintained to a good standard. Playrooms were inviting and comfortable. Some homely touches, such as displays, soft furnishings and furniture helped create a nurturing, sensory rich environment for children. Children had space to store their personal items which helped provide them with a sense of belonging and sent a message to them that they matter. A parent/carer told us, "the friendly and home from home environment has allowed my child to grow and develop a lot in the last year."

Cosy spaces created places for children to relax, refresh and unwind, supporting their overall wellbeing. We encouraged the service to continue to ensure this is a key feature in all playrooms.

Play areas had been well considered and were continually adapted to take account of children's interests and overall needs. Areas offered sufficient space for children to play on their own and in small or larger groups with some spaces used flexibly to extend their activities. Additional spaces in the nursery were used well to support children, for example the sensory room provided a calm space to support children's emotional wellbeing. We encouraged staff to ensure that areas are suitably equipped with the resources children need to support and extend their play. We encouraged them to continue to monitor and evaluate play spaces to ensure children consistently experience high quality play opportunities.

While playrooms were warm and cosy, we noted that they became very cool when the doors to the outdoor areas were opened. The senior management team were working with the provider and staff to identify a solution. Leaders and staff agreed to continue to monitor the temperature of playrooms and consider how children can more freely access outdoors. There were plans in place to further develop outdoor areas, which will improve the quality of children's outdoor play experiences.

Good infection prevention and control practices supported a safe environment for children. For example, staff and children engaged in hand washing at key times and children were well supported to do this effectively. PPE was used at appropriate times and systems were in place to ensure areas were clean and hygienic.

Staff worked well together to create a safe environment where children were protected from harm. Measures such as secure entry, children being appropriately supervised and safe storage of hazardous materials contributed to keeping children safe. Staff used risk assessments to support them to identify any potential risks to children. The manager has agreed to support staff to strengthen their approach to ensure they are meaningful and fully reflect all areas of the environment.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The manager had a clear vision for the service which had been created with staff, parents/carers and children. Children's wellbeing and right to play was at the heart of their work.

The service was led by a strong leader who worked with the senior leadership team to support staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their abilities to support children and their families. Leaders had a very good understanding of what high quality care looked like and had implemented many meaningful changes throughout the nursery, which had impacted positively on children and their families. The manager was well supported by the local authority Quality Officer to make positive improvements to the service. Staff told us, "I feel we have made great progress this year at Baird. It is a lovely place to work, I feel valued and proud of the work I do." and "I feel there has been a lot of change within Baird within the last year. All of this I feel has made a huge difference to staff and children all of which could not have been done without all leaders and staff."

Through the use of robust quality assurance processes, the senior leadership team had a very good understanding the service's strengths and the improvements that were still needed to improve the overall quality of the service. Effective monitoring of all aspects of the service ensured the quality of provision was of a high standard.

Staff were involved in working parties to lead on the services priorities. This helped to develop staff confidence and practice. Plans were in place to strengthen this approach by providing opportunities for staff to lead on specific areas of practice.

Staff's continuing professional development was well supported through having their work appraised by senior leaders and felt this was a very supportive process. Staff told us that they felt their work was valued and that they received recognition for their hard work and achievements. They felt they were an integral part in driving forward improvements.

Families were very much involved in developing the setting. The service used many ways to gather parents/carers views, for example, providing opportunities to engage in the setting, asking a question of the month, regular newsletters and sharing their views more informally. A parent/carer told us that they liked, "the question of the month to improve services and learning journal to give ideas." and "We are emailed monthly a question of the month to give our views on different areas, this helps us feel very involved."

The manager ensured that information relating to how their suggestions had been taken on board was shared with them. This demonstrated that their views were valued and that the service continued to meet their needs and expectations. A parent/carer commented, "We always informed about progress in the service and asked for feed back on things that are going on."

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.3- Staff deployment.

Staff engaged very well with the inspection process and were confident, open and professional in their discussions. They were receptive to feedback and willing to make improvements to ensure good outcomes for children.

Staff were kind, caring and very nurturing in their interactions with the children. They were respectful and affectionate. They genuinely wanted the very best for children and their families.

Staff were enthusiastic about their role and spoke positively about their work. Effective use was made of the different experience, knowledge and skills of the staff team to ensure all children's experiences throughout the day were positive. They worked well as a team, communicating effectively and offering support where needed. Senior staff were available to assist and support and we observed some good role modelling for other staff.

There was a more settled staff team now in place which ensured consistency and continuity of care for children. New colleagues were well supported to understand the complex needs of children. The National Induction Resource was used to ensure effective support, development and mentoring. New staff told us they felt very supported in their role.

Staff felt well supported by leaders and colleagues and told us they loved their work. They were very committed to the children in their care and had a very positive approach to their role. They embraced opportunities to work with staff members across the setting and other establishments to share views, ideas and use the learning to develop practice.

Staff spoke knowledgeably about the individual needs of children and training they had attended reflected children's specific needs. Where required, staff accessed specialised training to ensure they could provide tailored and personalised care to meet their needs. A parent/carer commented, "my child has complex needs and they are surrounded by staff who have a high level of experience and training. They get to experience lots of things in a safe environment." another told us, "There are so many positives, the care from the staff in the nursery and school overall towards my child is probably the most positive."

Staff commented, "It has been a pleasure and a huge learning experience to have worked at Baird. Everyone is so highly motivated to provide the highest possible standard of care for all our children and their families."

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 ensure children's comfort and dignity, the provider should ensure that nappy changing facilities reflect the needs of children attending the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'If I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected' (HSCS 1.4) and 'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed' (HSCS 5.4)

This area for improvement was made on 14 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The service had made appropriate improvements to changing areas, including suitably sized changing beds to meet the needs of the children attending.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure that outcomes for children and families continuously improve, the manager and staff should develop robust quality assurance processes.

This is to ensure that children's care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 14 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The manager had developed and implemented robust quality assurance systems which were leading to positive improvements in the service.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To promote children's wellbeing, safety and development, the manager should make sure that staff have regular opportunities to engage with and communicate with families.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'my care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 14 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Parents/carers have meaningful opportunities to engage in the life of the service through regular stay and play sessions, social events, reviewing their child's personal plan, newsletters, twitter, and engaging with children's online learning journals.

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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