

Forth Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 November 2024

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015294

About the service

Forth Primary School Nursery Class is a daycare of children service provided by South Lanarkshire Council and located in the village of Forth. It is close to public transport links and local amenities. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 64 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided from the nursery wing of Forth Primary School. Playrooms have direct access to a large outdoor play area, which children can independently access throughout their day. Children also make use of facilities within the school, including the school grounds and wooded area to support outdoor play and learning.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 18 November 2024 between 10:15 and 16:00. We concluded the inspection on Tuesday 9 November 2024 when we also gave inspection feedback to a representative of the service provider, the temporary manager and team leader. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with some of the children and reviewed survey responses from five parents. We also spoke with one parent
- spoke with the temporary service manager, team leader and nine staff. We also reviewed survey responses from five staff
- reviewed feedback from four visiting professionals from external agencies
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were nurtured and cared for by staff who knew them and their needs very well.
- An effective personal planning approach contributed to children's overall health and wellbeing.
- Children had opportunities to problem solve and develop their curiosity, through play experiences both inside and outdoors.
- The service provider and management team had taken positive action to make improvements since the last inspection.
- Staff were passionate about their leadership roles, which demonstrated that leadership was highly valued at all levels.

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 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.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were very well nurtured and supported by compassionate staff, who knew them and their needs very well. Staff gathered information about children in the different parts of their personal plans, which helped support children's individual needs and track their care, learning and development. Staff practice reflected families' personal preferences and respected children's independence, privacy and dignity. Staff conversations with parents and carers at children's drop off and pick up times were friendly and respectful. This made it more likely that parents would feel comfortable to share information about their child with staff or raise any concerns about their care.

There was a strong ethos within the school community that families were important and that their contribution was valued. In response to our survey, most parents confirmed that they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan. Their comments included, "If my child needs extra support there always someone to help". Strategies were shared between the setting, external agencies and parents, which ensured consistency in how children were cared for. Comments from other agencies included, "the staff are always positive and focused on supporting the children in a caring and nurturing way, which can be difficult in a busy nursery setting with other tasks and jobs needing completed. The setting is not only excellent for all children but in particular for ASN children."

The setting was committed to attachment informed practice with one member of staff taking on the leadership role of 'Attachment Ambassador', to ensure the ethos was embedded throughout daily practice. The staff team had engaged in professional learning around supporting children's wellbeing and upholding their rights. Children were spoken to and listened to by staff in ways that encouraged them to feel valued, respected and loved. Children were supported to understand and express their emotions through a range of resources, such as little groups participating in yoga sessions organised by the attachment ambassador. This meant children were developing valuable emotional literacy skills, with the ability to recognise and describe their feelings.

Children were safe and protected from harm due to the clear child protection systems that the setting had in place. Staff confirmed that they participated in annual refresher training about safeguarding, which ensured they would be confident in supporting children's welfare and wellbeing when they had any concerns. Staff were skilled at enabling children to take risks and developing confidence, whilst staying safe. They had embedded the key messages from the Care Inspectorate's safety campaign, 'Keeping Children Safe - Look, Think, Act' (SIMOA) in a meaningful way for children. Children enjoyed singing a song about the role of Simoa. Children took it in turns to take Simoa home, so that they could think about potential dangers around their environment and activities. As a result children were learning life skills, such as being safe by wearing a helmet when riding their bike. The SIMOA campaign helps keep children safe by raising awareness of how, and why, they could leave a childcare setting without a responsible adult.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were encouraged to lead their play and could independently access the outdoor area, where there was plenty of loose parts for them to experiment with. Children could freely choose from a wide range of experiences suitable to their age and stage, which stimulated their natural curiosity, learning and creativity. Children followed their own play ideas with staff knowing when to step in and use skilled questioning to scaffold their learning. This helped children develop their problem-solving skills, awarding them a sense of achievement.

Children were proud to show us where they could play and their preferred resources. As they immersed themselves in imaginative play through trying on dress up clothes, one child asked us, "Can you guess what I am?" It was good practice that staff encouraged children to try and put on outfits themselves, to promote independence and life skills.

From playroom displays and organisation of resources as well as activities, it was evident that staff were working toward a numeracy and literacy enriched environment. For example, children were learning about mathematical language as they enjoyed using measuring terms to compare their heights on a wall chart. Singing and enjoying story books together supported children's understanding and learning about different sounds in a fun way, therefore contributing to the development of early literacy skills.

Floor books were being used by staff to encourage children to talk about their learning and what they wanted to know more about. This informed staff responsive planning that respected children's interests while offering challenge. One member of staff explained, "I follow the children's lead, I observe and listen for learning queues, I then set out provocation to enhance or extend the learning". The team leader had introduced the new local authority tracker so that everyone could have an overview of the progress children made across their learning.

We discussed with the management team how children's voice could be more evident within their individual learning journals. Staff already had plans to further develop how children's voice was represented on wall displays at their level. They should continue with these plans as it will encourage children to express their views and boost their self esteem.

Parents appreciated the online learning journals, which helped them to feel involved in planning for their child's play, learning and development. For example, some parents were confident to share children's significant events and achievements from their life outside the setting. Parents were regularly invited into the setting for 'stay and play,' informal nursery natters or to participate in Bookbug and PEEP sessions. This ensured parents felt valued as active participants in their child's learning. The Peep learning together programme encourages parents to make the most of day-to-day learning opportunities with their children, such as listening, talking, playing, singing, and sharing books and stories together.

How good is our setting?

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were cared for in a clean, bright and welcoming environment, which was well maintained. Children were kept safe within the building through various safety measures, including secure door entry systems. Children's safety was further promoted through detailed risk assessments for all areas and activities

accessed by them. Staff were aware of their responsibility to identify and remove any new hazards in the way of children's safety and wellbeing. Children were also kept safe and healthy because of the robust infection control practices that were in place within the setting, for example they were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout their day.

All areas accessed by children were carefully thought out by staff, and provided a comfortable and stimulating space for children to play. Cloak room areas, with individual pegs for personal belongings, supported children's independence and feeling of inclusion. There was a good mix of manufactured and natural resources, indoors and outdoors, with picture prompts that reminded children where items were stored or what they could be used for. Resources were appropriate for the interests and abilities of children attending the setting, which meant activities were inclusive of all children. As a result, children were enabled to learn key skills through play and having fun. Management agreed that children would benefit from the provision of more resources that explicitly represented diversity. This would be in keeping with the setting's recent focus on children's rights, and would help children learn about respect for others.

Children had accompanied access to facilities within the school that included the gym hall, community rooms and breakout area. Supporting children to become familiar with the geography of the school and the people in it helped them feel safe and included in the school community as well as easing their transitions to primary one. Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through links with the wider community, for example making use of wooded areas for forest kindergarten sessions. On the day of our inspection, groups of children chose to go for a walk in the local neighbourhood. Their trip took in sets of traffic lights that generated animated discussions about road safety with their peers, when they returned to the setting. Allowing children to get to know their local area, offers real life experiences and a sense of connectedness.

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.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

A shared vision across the school community had created an inclusive ethos. The reception areas provided families with plenty of information about the life and work of the service and helped everyone feel welcome and included.

The temporary management team demonstrated a commitment to improvement planning that placed children and families at the heart of service delivery. They utilised a range of self evaluation tools to inform practice and support positive outcomes for children and families. This included 'How good is our early learning and childcare' (Education Scotland), South Lanarkshire Council's 'Together we can' document and the Care Inspectorate's 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare'. As a result a previous area for improvement around quality assurance processes had been met.

Staff told us they felt very supported. Their comments included, "Management are approachable, and listen to concerns and always try to find a resolution or compromise". The team leader provided a clear focus for their shared team work including setting out responsibilities and expectations. Staff participated in curricular leadership groups to assist them in taking service priorities forward within the setting. This had given staff confidence to initiate well-informed change and feel a sense of ownership of the service improvement plan. We sampled supervision notes and found staff performance was constructively reviewed,

with effective support planned and evaluated. This leadership approach empowered staff and enabled them to improve through reflective practice.

Regular and purposeful communication took place with families, beyond the daily chats at drop off and pick up times for children. This included home visits for some families before their child joined the service and welcome meetings for prospective parents, with opportunities to ask questions about the life of the service. The setting used social media and newsletters to share information, including photos of activities and experiences children had enjoyed within the setting. In their feedback to us, most parents confirmed that they felt they had been meaningfully consulted. This contributed to them feeling respected and that their perspective was valued.

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.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

The service provider had safe recruitment practices in place that included an induction programme so that any new staff felt welcomed and understood their role. Staff appreciated that the temporary team leader had taken time to get to know them individually and share good practice. This meant that staff strengths were recognised, and they were deployed in a way which best supported children's individual needs.

The management team were sensitive to how staffing levels and skills mix could impact on the quality of outcomes for children. Staff shift rotas and breaks were organised to ensure minimum disruption to children's routines and offer continuity in their care. Timely breaks also enabled staff to rest before returning refreshed to engage with children. This promoted everyone's wellbeing and safety.

Staff worked very well together as a team, which modelled respectful relationships for children. They regularly met together to discuss children's experiences and reflect on how to further enrich children's play and learning. Meetings were scheduled so that there was time to discuss operational issues for the setting and self evaluation, separate from children's attendance pattern. This meant that during their child contact time, staff could focus on quality interactions. Staff effectively organised their time so that they could meet with external agencies when needed, such as educational psychologist, speech and language therapists and health visitors. This enabled them to work collaboratively in identifying the right support for children.

External professionals commented positively on the professionalism and flexibility of staff in meeting the needs of children and families, "The staff provide excellent support to the children in their care. Staff recognise the importance of establishing warm, caring relationships with each individual, providing a nurturing environment for the children to develop and grow".

Staff recognised the importance of developing strong and secure attachments with children and with building relationships with parents. They were highly skilled at engaging positively with children and families, as well as each other. We observed staff providing compassionate and responsive care to children, which helped build children's confidence and sense of belonging. Parents were welcomed by staff at the beginning and end of each session, which helped them build relationships with the team that would be looking after their children. Parents got to know more about who individual staff were and their role by looking at the photo boards and minibiographies, at the entrance to the setting.

Parents who responded to our survey agreed they had a strong connection with staff. Parent involvement within settings helps establish a supportive learning environment for children. One parent had commented within our survey, "I feel I can come to the staff with any question or concerns". This helped ensure everyone was working together to support the best outcomes for children.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 30 November 2023, the service provider must ensure procedures for notification reporting to the Care Inspectorate as required by guidance 'Records that all care services (except childminding) must keep and guidance on notification reporting' are known by all staff and made within timescales. This will contribute to the safety and wellbeing of children. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure that child protection procedures include the legal requirement of services to immediately notify the Care Inspectorate of allegations of abuse concerning a child
- b) ensure that the induction of registered managers includes responsibilities of the child protection co-ordinator role in relation to the above.

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

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This requirement was made on 25 October 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service provider had reviewed and updated their Child Protection policy and operating procedures, including the legal requirement for early learning and childcare settings to immediately notify the Care Inspectorate of allegations of abuse concerning children. Supporting materials were circulated to managers of services and this had included input from the Care Inspectorate. We found that both management and staff had a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and their practice was supported by comprehensive child protection processes.

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 ensure that outcomes for children and families continuously improve, the manager and staff should ensure that effective and robust systems are in place to monitor and sustain a quality service. This will contribute to children and families experiencing consistently positive outcomes. This should include but not be limited to:

- 1) auditing children's medication records
- 2) reviewing risk assessments to make sure they are responsive to changing circumstances
- 3) monitoring staff practice and linking to the overall training strategy for the service
- 4) consolidating self evaluation processes, ensuring that staff and families are meaningfully involved in the process

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 25 October 2023.

Action taken since then

The acting manager and team leader work effectively as a team to facilitate a wide range of relevant quality assurance and monitoring activities. These were outlined in a quality assurance calendar. Leadership roles for other members of the team were underpinned by professional development so that everyone was involved in developing and making improvements to the service. Questionnaires were being used to consult with families to ensure their views were taken account of within the service improvement journey. The management team shared plans for other activities to support self evaluation, such as developing peer evaluations. This area for improvement had 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?	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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