

Strathallan Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Strathallan Primary School
Strathallan Drive
Kirkcaldy
KY2 5YP

Telephone: 01592 583 434

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 November 2024

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2006140978

About the service

Strathallan Primary School Nursery is in Kirkcaldy, Fife. They are registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 60 children from three years of age until an age to attend primary school.

The service is in a designated area of the school campus. It is close to green spaces and can be reached by local transport links.

Children have access to two playrooms that open onto a large, enclosed garden area, toilet facilities, sensory room and other areas within the school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 26 November and Wednesday 27 November 2024. Feedback was shared on Thursday 28 November 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 observed their play
- spoke with nine families during the visit and received feedback via an electronic link from seven families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children were happy, engaged and having fun as they explored indoors and outdoors.
- Play spaces were maintained, inviting and well resourced.
- Children had some opportunities to develop independence skills through play, learning and routines.
- Children's individual learning was recorded in personal learning journals that were of a high standard.
- Staff supported children to make progress at a pace that was right for them.
- Children and families worked closely with staff to agree next steps in learning.
- The service was led well by a new head teacher that supported staff to have high aspirations for children.
- Staff should familiarise themselves with risk assessments that are in place and take action to minimise potential risks when identified.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
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?

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children and families experienced warm and welcoming approaches and were greeted when they entered the service. Staff spent time talking to families, which enabled them to meet children's individual needs. Staff had completed training in nurturing relationships and the service had plans to re-visit this learning to ensure a consistent approach. We asked families what they liked about the nursery. They told us my child "feels loved and appreciated by all of the staff," "staff genuinely care about the children," "Staff are very welcoming" and "Always approachable, and on hand with advice if required." As a result, families had trust in the team to meet their child's needs.

Cosy areas offered children space to rest and relax throughout playrooms. They had access to a designated sensory room that offered them space to explore a range of resources to support emotional wellbeing.

The mealtime experiences offered children some ownership of this routine. They were able to decide when to eat snacks and made food selections from a variety of healthy options served. To promote more independent experiences, we encouraged staff to ensure children had daily opportunities to prepare snacks and benefit from the rich learning this offers. Lunch was provided in the school dining hall. Children were able to select some foods at their table and take responsibility for clearing away dishes. Staff sat with children, using the opportunity to engage in conversation. At times this was difficult due to the noise level. We encouraged the service to look at how this routine could be further developed to promote a quieter and unhurried experience.

Children's rights were promoted through discussions and fun activities. Staff used articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) throughout the service and in children's journals. We saw lovely examples of how they supported children to understand their right to a name and how they involved families in this. Some had shared the story of how the child's name had been chosen when they were born. We encouraged the service to ensure staff use children's names to promote a positive sense of self.

Personal plans were in place and were of a high standard, with examples of children's own creations, photos and observations. Plans were updated regularly in consultation with families. Staff used this information to support children to make progress at a pace that was right for them.

Children's healthcare requirements and medication was safely managed by staff. They had a good awareness of needs and families' preferences. Relevant information had been reviewed regularly in line with guidance. This ensured the systems they had in place promoted children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children led their play for the duration of the day with minimal disruption. Staff sat with children, engaged in conversation to deepen learning and engagement.

They were responsive to children's requests for additional resources. Children told us they liked to make playdough, play with their friends, go outside and build rockets. As a result, they were engaged for sustained periods.

Staff had made changes to the learning environment through reflective discussions as a team and close working with other professionals. This supported them to evaluate children's experiences and plan for ongoing improvements. This offered children a range of core provision to lead their interests. We recognised the breadth of experiences would continue to develop as work with other professionals was ongoing.

Literacy and numeracy was promoted as children had opportunities to mark make, recognise print, share books, sing songs, and take part in nursery narrative sessions. Children enjoyed showing us the letters they created. We encouraged the service to continue to look at other ways to broaden these opportunities indoors and outdoors to promote learning.

Planning approaches were a balance of responsive and intentional promotion. Staff recorded observations to document learning and progress. Evidence of learning was shared with families online and through the personal learning journal. To ensure a breadth of learning across the curriculum, staff tracked children's experiences throughout the year. We encouraged staff to include next steps in learning as part of their planning cycle to ensure all staff were clear about what was important to each child and their role in supporting children to thrive and flourish.

Families were invited to talk about their child's progress and be involved in working together to set next steps in learning. Nearly all families we spoke to told us they had opportunities to discuss their child's progress.

Floor books recorded children's experiences that included visits to the local woods and gym hall. We suggested staff would benefit from additional training in documenting children's learning. This would ensure consistency in what was recorded and promote children to revisit learning and share this with family and friends.

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

The setting was based within a designated area of the school campus. Children had access to two large playrooms, large secure garden, toilet facilities and a sensory room. The setting was homely, comfortable and well maintained. Play spaces were well-ventilated and benefitted from natural light. Children were able to access the outdoor area directly from each playroom as the door to the garden was open for most of the session. Special curtains over the open doors ensured the temperature in the room remained warm. This meant children were warm and comfortable, had choice in where to play, whilst offering free flow access to the outdoors.

Families told us the service provides "A welcoming safe environment where my child is relaxed and happy. I attribute this to the welcoming and friendly staff and the atmosphere they create in the nursery," and I "feel it is a safe and supportive environment for learning." This meant families had confidence that children experienced play and learning in well maintained spaces.

Staff had created small areas indoors that were cosy and inviting. These offered children a range of play opportunities that promoted imagination, creativity and some challenge. The large area outdoors meant children had space to move freely, offered a balance of age-appropriate resources that included loose part play, investigation and exploration and learn about risk in play. Children used all areas well and had ownership of spaces.

Staff supported children to carry out daily checks of the garden area. They recorded their findings on the pictorial sheet provided. This supported children to learn about risk and how to manage this. Staff used the Care Inspectorate, Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act (SIMOA) elephant to support children to be aware of dangers around their environments.

Detailed risk assessments were in place for the wider experiences and spaces children accessed. We encouraged the service to ensure staff were fully aware of these and confident in the steps they should take to mitigate potential risks (See area for improvement 1.)

Infection prevention and control practice was embedded for most part of the day and during care routines. Children washed their hands at key times and were confident to talk about why this was important. Staff prepared areas before children enjoyed snacks and played. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was used by staff when needed. This promoted safe practice.

Children accessed toilet facilities from each playroom. We encouraged the service to ensure the bins were effective and easily operated to minimise the possibilities of cross contamination. We signposted the service to the updated guidance 'Health protection in children and young people's settings, including education (Public Health Scotland, 2024) to ensure they are aware of best practice.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all play spaces and resources are safe and inviting for children indoors and outdoors, staff must familiarise themselves with the service risk assessments and take action to mitigate potential risks. They should evidence what measures have been implemented to reduce any potential harm.

This is to ensure that I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.19) and

"I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment." (HSCS 5.24).

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements and led well

Children, families and staff benefitted from an effective leadership team who worked well together to influence change at a pace that was right for the service. They promoted a shared vision of improvement to ensure positive outcomes. The service had recently reviewed their vision, values and aims to reflect their aspirations for all learners.

This supported staff to know what was important to the service and be clear about the role they played in delivering this.

Gathering the views of all stakeholders was valued. Families told us they were consulted regularly through questionnaires, face to face discussions, online platforms and had the opportunity to join the Parent Council meetings. Feedback was used to support ongoing improvements. As a result, children, families and staff were meaningfully involved in developing the service.

Quality assurance systems evidenced consistency in children's personal learning journals and core provision through audits. The leadership team had a detailed plan of assurance tasks in place that will support the ongoing development and bring about positive changes and consistency across the service.

Staff communicated with families using technology and valuing the importance of taking time to build positive relationships. Families told us communication was good; they knew what was happening in the service and liked that staff took time to talk with them. This meant that families felt informed.

Staff were committed to their role in improving the environment and experiences for children. They had begun to make changes led by a committed and dedicated leadership team. Change was managed at a pace to ensure it was sustained and embedded and staff were able to reflect on the positive impact this had on children.

Staff worked closely with specialist teams, engaging in training that supported them to make improvements to meet all learners needs. Staff spoke confidently about the impact this had on their practice and their understanding of how children connect with their learning environment and build relationships with staff.

The leadership team demonstrated they valued the key role every member played in building a strong team. They promoted distributed leadership roles where staff developed areas and experiences for children and families, linked to their skills and interests. As a result, staff felt included and were embracing change.

The team engaged in regular reflective discussions and continuous self-evaluation. They used these reflections to develop the learning environment. Staff recognised they are on a journey of improvement and development plans were in place that ensured change involved all stakeholders and at a pace that was sustainable.

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

Children experienced care from a staff team who recognised each other's strengths and experience. Their knowledge and interests complimented one another. They valued the support from the new head teacher who was present in the setting. They had taken time to build relationships with staff and children and this was influential in driving positive change.

Staff were deployed across the service to meet children's needs and wishes. We encouraged the service to look at tasks that took staff away from children to minimise disruption and ensure children are supervised at all times.

It was recognised that staff absence had some impact on the continuity of care for children. The service had taken measures to manage this and minimise disruption. They used familiar supply staff to support during periods of absence. This meant they got to know children and what was important at Strathallan Nursery. Families told us they were aware of staff absence and had noticed an improvement.

Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities and worked together to ensure they responded to children's needs. There was a genuine care for each other. They told us they felt supported and 'liked' being part of the team. As a result, staff were happy and felt valued in their role.

Regular team meetings provided opportunities for staff to come together and discuss the service. Information on individual children, best practice documents and planning for a breadth of experiences created opportunities for staff to reflect on practice and improvements to ensure they were meeting the needs of every child.

The service had a mentoring programme in place that reflected national and local guidance. This supported staff to know what was important in the service. Staff told us the team support each other, making them feel included.

Regular stay and play and forest Kindergarten sessions offered opportunities for families to engage in their child's learning. The service had plans to further develop family engagement through PEEP sessions. Families told us they liked taking part in these sessions and being welcomed into the setting, seeing how their child spent their day. Staff took time to talk with families and we could see positive relationships had been established. Families commented "The staff very much cares about the whole family," "I feel staff have a good rapport with my children and know them well," "The relationship with nursery staff is strong, and "They are always chatty and friendly when we go in and share what my child has been up to." As a result, families had trust and confidence in the team.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.