

Carmuir's Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Carmuir's Street
Camelon
Falkirk
FK1 4PZ

Telephone: 01324 508 580

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 December 2024

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2003043637

About the service

Carmuir Primary School Nursery is situated in Camelon within Falkirk Council provision and is registered to provide day care for a maximum of 48 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending school at each session. The nursery offers funded places and operates term time between 9 am and 3 pm.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 and 5 of December. 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 information gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with 24 children and four of their family members
- spoke with 10 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff responded warmly and compassionately to children's changing needs throughout the day through kind and responsive interactions.
- Children and their right to play mattered in the setting, resulting in children feeling confident and comfortable in their play.
- Children benefitted from opportunities to develop early literacy and numeracy skills.
- The leadership team and the nursery staff demonstrated a clear commitment to support children and families in the setting by building positive connections with them.
- The management team made good use of the mix of skills in the staff to support the activities and the routines of the day.
- Staff communicated well with each other when a task might take them away from an activity and reflected together on their practice.

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

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

Children experienced nurturing and sensitive approaches to support their wellbeing. As a result, they were settled and happy. Staff carried out care routines in a calm and respectful way, ensuring privacy and dignity and promoting children's independence. This enabled children to develop a positive sense of self and as a result, children were becoming more confident in looking after their personal care. Staff responded warmly and compassionately to children's changing needs throughout the day through kind and responsive interactions.

We found inconsistencies in the set of documents included in the care plans. To make sure staff respond quickly and sensitively to any changes in a child's life, we encouraged the leadership team to review the personal planning. This will help staff identify more effectively children's interests, preferences, and needs and how these are progressing. The leadership team agreed with our findings. They identified parental contribution to the care plans as an aspect which will help strengthen continuity of care and the capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of the support in place. Involving children in the process would help make the document more meaningful and central to each child's individual needs. Staff told us: 'we aim to work together to streamline these to make them more user friendly'. To this effect, we signposted the setting to the Care Inspectorate 'Guide for providers on personal planning', which provides examples of how to structure the content.

Staff were working towards identifying strategies and next steps to support children's individual needs. They had established good working relationships with other professionals, such as health visitors and educational psychologists. We suggested that an overview of the strategies implemented is shared effectively within the team and made accessible to all staff, including supply staff and students. This will also ensure that the strategies implemented remain relevant to the children and their families and open to be reviewed meaningfully.

Children benefitted from a flexible arrangement for their mealtimes, which made the experience relaxed and sociable. They were also involved in making their own snack. For lunch, staff had implemented a two-sitting system with children placing their own photo in a basket to signal when they chose to sit down and have lunch. Children were encouraged to use real cutlery and most of them independently cut their food with some support from staff. We discussed with staff ways in which the lunch experience could be enhanced further to support children in being more independent and practice their life skills. For example, children could pour their own drinks from jugs that were easier to lift and hold. We also asked staff to reflect on how they could review the routines of the day. This is to allow children who are engrossed in play to continue in their activity, if they do not wish to have lunch in the first sitting.

An effective system ensured children's medical needs were reviewed and kept up to date in line with best practice. Children's food dietary requirements were also taken into consideration and clearly displayed for all the staff to access confidentially. As a result, children's safety was ensured. We signposted staff to the Care Inspectorate 'New guidance on management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services'.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

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

Children had fun in a mostly unhurried and relaxed atmosphere. Children and their right to play mattered in the setting, resulting in children feeling confident and comfortable in their play. Staff were developing a planning cycle to make it both responsive to children's interests and effective in increasing their engagement. As a result, children benefitted from opportunities to develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Indoors, there were practising writing Santa's address on an envelope, counting how many stamps they would need and making Christmas shapes with play dough. Outdoors, children were re-enacting stories like 'Goldilocks and the three bears', while discussing size and were learning mathematical language when following recipes in the mud kitchen. We discussed with staff how the role of the practitioner, the environment and the resources could be reviewed to make the play more engaging, supporting children in developing their creativity and imagination.

Staff were eager to support the children, offering kind and nurturing interactions. A parent commented: 'it is a safe space for children to be themselves'. We shared with the senior management team our observations of children at play, and they agreed that there were some missed opportunities to deepen learning and support the children further. For example, in the role play in the home corner and at the playdough table. The next step would be for staff to gain the confidence to use effective questioning to enrich the children's experiences further. This would help children to truly lead their learning. The use of a floorbook to document children's interests and the activities they engaged in supported children in revisiting and consolidating their learning.

The senior leadership team was also developing children's observations and tracking and monitoring tools and this was beginning to have an impact on how they tailored the curriculum to suit the children's needs. Reviewing the effectiveness of these tools to measure children's progress will help staff to identify how to widen children's skills further.

The setting made good use of the local community to enhance children's play and learning. They regularly visited their local shops, went on walks in the woodland and engaged in inter-generational activities with the local care home. This contributed to children's sense of belonging and supported them to have new opportunities out with the setting.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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

The setting was well-furnished and comfortable. Communal areas were welcoming and organised with space for children's belongings. Rooms had natural light, were ventilated and were pleasant places to be. The setting and equipment were safe, secure and well-maintained. Infection prevention and control measures were in place and staff were mostly vigilant with children's handwashing. This reduced the risk of infection spread. The setting offered free flow between indoors and outdoors with staff moving about the two areas depending on the number of children engaged in the outdoor provision.

Both environments offered core resources such as sand, paint, water and dough. This indicated staff knowledge of what children needed to explore and flourish. Some areas would benefit from spaces, resources and experiences that invite more intrigue and curiosity, such as the block area and the home corner. This would help spark their imagination further.

Risks assessments were in place and identified the benefits of risky play, while highlighting the safety measures staff put in place. We asked the setting to consider reviewing these meaningfully with the children, starting with those most relevant to their current interests. This will support the children to take ownership of their play and engage in risky play while keeping safe.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are well led

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

The leadership team and the nursery staff demonstrated a clear commitment to support children and families in the setting by building positive connections with them. This was evident in the several initiatives they offered to families to be involved in the nursery activities such as play and stay, bookbug and breakfast sessions. This made them feel valued and included. A parent commented: 'we have a friendly relationship based on respect and understanding'. Another parent reported: 'The staff take a genuine interest not only in my child, but in our family'. We encouraged the leadership team to consider reviewing the aims and the values in consultation with the children and their families. This is to ensure that the current vision for the nursery truly reflects the high aspirations staff have for children and their families.

Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement plans were being developed. We encouraged the senior management team to closely observe staff practice to gain an in-depth awareness of staff strengths and areas for professional development. This would strengthen their shared leadership approach and support staff to take the lead on specific improvements.

We also discussed the pace of change and how the culture of collaboration that they were developing could help embed the changes in a way that is sustainable for staff and meaningful to children and their families.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

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

The management team made good use of the mix of skills in the staff to support the activities and the routines of the day. There was a high staff:child ratio, which ensured high levels of supervision at busier times. This supported the children to have gentle transitions, particularly after lunch. We suggested that the leadership team review the roles and responsibilities of staff to make sure that children receive the extra support they need in a timely and consistent manner.

Staff communicated well with each other when a task might take them away from an activity and reflected together on their practice.

Staff were deployed in a way that enabled the setting to offer free flow from indoors to outdoors as well as a mostly free flow lunch. Children chose when they wanted to play outdoors, if they wanted to have lunch in the first sitting or afterwards, with some children really benefitting from the quieter second sitting.

The number of staff deployed ensured continuity of care. However, at times the choice of routines and transitions in the day caused unnecessary disruption to children's levels of engagement in play -for example tidying up before 'Together time'. We encouraged the team to find a balance between offering a clear pace of the day for the children who need it and allowing others to experience longer periods of uninterrupted play.

We reviewed the induction procedures for the setting and asked the manager to consider formalising them to support new members of staff and students to familiarise themselves with the policies and expectations around conduct. This would make them feel supported and guided, resulting in better outcomes for children. We signposted the setting to the 'Early Learning and Childcare National Induction resource' to help them embed the new process further.

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

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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