

Newcastle Early Learning Nursery Day Care of Children

Newcastle Primary School
Muirfield Drive
Newcastle
Glenrothes
KY6 2PX

Telephone: 07368 296 890

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 January 2025

Service provided by:
Newcastle Early Learning Nursery

Service provider number:
SP2003001632

Service no:
CS2003007209

About the service

Newcastle Early Learning Nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 24 children at any one time, aged from two years 10 months, to an age to attend primary school.

The service is situated in Glenrothes, Fife. The service is located within Newcastle Primary School. Children have access to a playroom where they can take part in a wide range of high-quality play experiences. There is a small and fully enclosed outdoor learning environment for children to access throughout their nursery session.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 and 14 January 2025 between 09.00 and 16.00. We provided feedback on 14 January 2025. The inspection was carried out by an inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and any complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed feedback from eight families using MS forms
- reviewed feedback from four staff members employed in the service using MS forms
- spoke with senior management and all staff
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children had fun, they were engaged and challenged, as they explored a wide range of interesting resources and exciting experiences.

Staff worked very well together to deliver positive outcomes for children.

The manager was friendly, visible and approachable, which strengthened relationships with families.

The manager and staff team were passionate about their improvement journey. Highly effective self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were embedded.

The inspiring manager empowered all staff to be actively involved in improving the service. An innovative approach to distributed leadership motivated all staff to take full ownership of their leadership role and supported them to influence and lead change.

Children and their families benefitted from a team who were clearly committed to improving outcomes for everyone.

Effective staff deployment ensured that the needs of children were well met throughout their day.

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?	6 - Excellent
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 benefitted from a staff team who were warm, caring, and nurturing. We observed caring and sensitive approaches from staff throughout the inspection. Staff listened to children and responded appropriately, offering comfort and reassurance when needed. This ensured children felt safe, valued, listened to, and loved.

Personal plans were in place for each child. These were completed in collaboration with families to ensure information was current and reflected their needs, wishes and choices. This approach ensured consistency and continuity in care routines. These were regularly reviewed to ensure that all information was current. Families told us they had regular chats with staff to share information and they felt included in their child's care. Some comments included:

"Regular meetings with staff about progress of my son's learning and development. It feels very personal and not just generic."

"Parent chats each Term involve the parents and ask the parents input about what they think your child's personal plan and development should involve."

"Parent talks are always informative and led by the development of the child. I'm asked if I have any concerns or if there is anything specific, I would like them to work on with my child such as numbers / writing."

Support plans with clear strategies and evaluations of progress made, meant children with additional support needs were very well supported to achieve their full potential.

Staff were sensitive and respectful of children's dignity when supporting children with their personal care. This supported children to feel respected and valued.

Children experienced positive snack and lunchtime routines which were relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Staff were aware of any allergies or dietary needs which helped them to keep children safe. Children were developing important life skills during snack and lunchtime through opportunities to choose and self-serve. This created a sense of responsibility and helped children to feel valued.

Children's health and wellbeing was very well supported. There were quiet spaces where children could relax and rest. The daily routine and pace of the day was carefully considered to ensure it was responsive to children's needs. Staff worked together to ensure they provided consistency and continuity of care for all children.

Staff had a very good understanding of safeguarding procedures and spoke confidently of the steps to take should a concern or a support need arise for a child or family. We found that staff at all levels were confident in these processes and understood the importance of seeking support for children and families.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were having fun and clearly benefitted from a variety of play and learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors. Children experienced a balance of spontaneous and planned activities and had opportunities to lead their own play and learning.

Staff interactions were calm and encouraging. Staff carefully considered when their interactions would enhance or add value to children's play and learning.

Literacy and numeracy opportunities were naturally woven throughout the play spaces and was very well supported through a range of experiences. Staff understood the importance of language development and provided a variety of activities to support this. We saw children and staff sharing stories throughout the day. They frequently sang together as they used the song spoons. Children were developing confidence in learning early literacy and numeracy skills. We saw children counting aloud as they played, mark making and recognising some numbers in the environment.

Children had free flow access to the outdoor area, they enjoyed the benefits of fresh air, physical exercise and using open ended materials. In addition to daily outdoor play children also had access to the gym hall for planned activities. Staff understood the benefits of regular outdoor play and we saw them supporting children with risky play. For example, climbing on the indoor climbing frame. This approach encouraged children to understand their own capabilities and develop confidence in how to be safe.

Children's learning and development was very well supported by sharing observations and next steps with parents via a digital platform. Observations detailed significant learning and planned next steps that were relevant to individual children. Effective tracking mechanisms had been developed by the manager and this ensured that all children were supported to make progress on an individual basis. As a result, children were effectively supported to learn and achieve at a pace that was right for them. Children were keen to show us their personal learning journals and spent time looking through their folders and sharing their achievements with pride.

Children benefitted from regular opportunities to visit the wooded space and had developed strong links with their community through walks and visits to the local care home. This approach stimulated children's interest and feeling of inclusion in the local community and enhanced their play and learning opportunities.

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 and families benefitted from an environment that was well furnished, inviting, and welcoming. The entrance space was carefully considered, wall displays gave families key information on staffing and nursery news. Each child had a space for their coat and bag, this approach promoted a sense of belonging.

Children confidently moved across the play space and took part in a range of play experiences. Staff had worked hard to create an environment where children felt welcome and relaxed.

The play space was carefully considered, and staff were creative in their provision. For example, a variety of authentic real-life objects enhanced play spaces and promoted children's curiosity and creativity. Consideration had been given to creating quiet spaces for children to rest and relax. This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

The secure garden space was accessible throughout the session from each playroom. This space enabled children to explore the natural environment, be active and use open ended resources. Families who responded to our MS Forms survey told us that their child could play outdoors always or very often. Some of their comments included:

"Walks in the woods, visiting the park, going out to the garden, mud kitchen, playing on bikes, visiting the old people care home."

"My child loves going on the bikes in the garden, walks around the community and trips to the forest, they loved having a picnic on the big field!"

"Learning about bugs, playing with friends, becoming more independent around the garden."

Detailed risk assessments, specific to the service were used effectively by all staff to ensure children were safe and protected. These were regularly reviewed and updated to ensure any risks were minimised for children, families, and staff. Children were actively encouraged to consider potential risks both indoors and outdoors. Staff and children were actively engaging with the Care Inspectorate SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) campaign, which enhanced their practice and kept children safe. This supported the children's understanding of risk and keeping themselves and their friends safe.

Infection, prevention, and control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. The setting was visibly clean and clutter free. Staff sensitively supported children to wash their hands at various times throughout the day, promoting a safe environment for children.

How good is our leadership?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

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

Exceptionally strong, highly effective and aspirational leadership of the service led to outstanding outcomes for children and their families. The manager was a visible presence throughout the service allowing them to naturally observe and support staff practice in the playroom. This carefully considered approach helped identify key areas of strength or development. The small staff team told us they found this very supportive, that they felt highly valued and respected as skilled and experienced practitioners.

Children, families and staff were regularly consulted and this approach kept them firmly at the heart of improvements in the service. Children's voice was amplified by staff with their views, thoughts and ideas being highly valued and responded to. This ensured that children's views consistently informed improvements and shaped their nursery experience. The manager and staff team were passionate and enthusiastic about their improvement journey. They were committed to providing the highest quality care, play and learning experiences for all children, to ensure all children reached their full potential.

The manager had looked outward and had shared this inspirational practice with the sector at local authority level through a variety of approaches. This has included supporting colleagues through visits to other settings, speaking at local authority quality improvement sessions to share practice and supporting a pedagogical approach to play and learning in primary one. On a national level articles have been published on their innovative approaches to distributed leadership and preparing for inspection. By sharing this outstanding practice the service is supporting improvement at not only a local authority level but nationally across Scotland.

Staff shared their inspirational approach to individual leadership roles, they spoke with passion about the impact that these roles had on children's learning and development. For example, children showed us some yoga poses and told us how the 'Bee Mindful' bee character helped them to be calm, rest and relax. Staff within the service were empowered to take on leadership roles that built on their interests and strengths. The manager believed that all staff have leadership qualities that should be utilised and celebrated. This positive ethos of value, respect and inclusion had resulted in an extremely motivated staff team. Staff had very high aspirations for all children to ensure they flourished and thrived in the service. We found professional learning and staff development was exceptionally well planned, reviewed, and matched to the individual interests and needs of staff. Regular and meaningful discussions supported staff to review and reflect on their personal development and practice. This meant children's care was based on relevant and up to date guidance and practice.

Self-evaluation was prioritised and was now embedded into daily practice. Staff spoke confidently about their involvement in the improvement plan, and how they were making positive progress with current key priorities. The improvement plan was relevant, targeted, and focused on enhancing outcomes for all children. The inspirational manager empowered children, their families and staff to lead and shape improvements in their service. All improvements were a result of collaboration with children, families and staff. Continuous reflections and gathering regular feedback from children and their families supported and informed improvement. As a result, improvements in the setting were having a highly positive impact on outcomes for children over a long-sustained period.

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.

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them well and were committed to providing high-quality care and support. Families commented positively about the relationships and care provided by staff. They described them as "happy", "caring", "warm" and "friendly." Staff took a genuine interest in children, having fun and chatting to them about what they were doing.

Staff had clear roles and responsibilities and communicated very well as a team. Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. They were very warm, caring, and sensitive in their approach and demonstrated positive team working. This promoted a happy and secure environment for children.

Staffing in the nursery had been carefully considered and promoted consistency for children. This approach helped children to be familiar and secure with those caring for them. The staff team had a mix of skills, experience and knowledge and were observed working well as a team.

Effective team working created a warm atmosphere where staff were courteous and respectful to each other, and this contributed to the positive ethos of the service. This meant children benefitted from having staff who were trained, competent and skilled providing their care.

Daily protected time enabled staff to meet regularly to have professional discussions, reflect on their practice and plan children's learning play and experiences. The manager had recognised the importance of this protected time and created a weekly plan to use this time effectively. This ensured all staff were able to contribute to ongoing improvements and complete records of children's learning to a very high standard.

Staff spoke positively about teamwork and felt that the relationships between team members were strong.

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

The provider should ensure the specific care plans for individuals with any additional support needs, including chronologies where relevant are in place and kept under regular review. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 25 October 2019.

Action taken since then

All children have personal plans in place and individual children have other information as needed for example support plans for additional support needs.

Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should develop and put into place robust systems for the recruitment of staff, which are detailed and followed carefully by the provider and management. This is in order to confirm the fitness and suitability of employees prior to employment. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited" (HSCS 4.24).

This area for improvement was made on 25 October 2019.

Action taken since then

Staff recruitment procedures have now been improved and are in line with best practice guidance.

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?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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