

Macdiarmid Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Macdiarmid Primary School
Carbost
Skeabost Bridge
Portree
IV51 9PD

Telephone: 01470 532 229

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 January 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017240

About the service

Macdiarmid Primary School Nursery is located within the primary school building. The nursery has access to a playroom with toilet facilities and limited kitchen facilities. The playroom opens directly onto a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The children also have access to the bigger main school playground. Both areas offered good space and a range of open-ended and natural resources.

The service is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a service to a maximum 12 children not yet attending primary school at any one time, of those 12 no more than five are aged two years to under three years.

The manager is also the manager of Knockbreck Primary School and Edinbane Primary School and Nursery.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 23 January 2025. 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
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and settled in the nursery.
- Children's overall wellbeing was being supported by the nurturing and caring approaches of the staff, that helped positive relationships to be established.
- Staff had developed personal plans and used the information in them to support children and meet their needs.
- Good use was being made of loose parts and open ended resources to enrich children's play and learning.
- Daily access to outdoor play supported children's health and wellbeing.
- The outdoor play area needed further work to be undertaken to ensure it offered a safe space for children to play and learn.
- Quality assurance processes were developed to support continuous improvement of the service.

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?	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?

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 were happy, settled and having fun as they played alongside or with friends. Children were confident and familiar with the daily routine, giving them a sense of security. Children's wellbeing was supported through nurturing care and support from kind, caring and friendly staff. Staff valued children's voice and sensitively listened to their requests, which told us that their views and opinions mattered. Children were effectively supported through well timed and thoughtful interactions, which contributed to their sense of security and promoted their overall wellbeing. They were offered cuddles and reassurance with warmth and affection which helped them to feel safe and secure.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. The needs of each child were identified and recorded in their individual personal plans. These were completed and routinely reviewed in partnership with parents to ensure that they reflected children's current needs and the strategies required to meet these needs. Staff knew the children and their families well and could confidently discuss the children's routines, preferences and interests. This meant that all children were respected and valued as individuals.

Snack and mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried and sociable events which took place within the playroom. The food provided adhered to nutritional guidelines, promoting children's health. Staff took opportunities at these times to sit and talk with the children, promoting their language and communication skills and maintain relationships. Children were supported to develop important independence skills when pouring drinks and self serving snack.

No children currently attending the nursery needed a regular nap during their time there. Staff, however, acknowledged the importance of sleep for children's wellbeing. Mats were available and consideration had been given to where to place these to ensure any sleeping children would be safe should the need arise.

Children's health was promoted through the processes in place to manage the storage and administration of any medication. Children's safety and wellbeing was protected through the staff understanding of their role in identifying, recording and referring any concerns they may have. Staff had attended relevant child protection training and demonstrated a good understanding of the service's policy and procedures.

Children and families benefited from a service that valued the importance of establishing strong working relationships with families to support children. This ensured that children received appropriate levels of consistent care and support. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time, and there were opportunities for parents to spend time in the nursery during stay and play sessions.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were engaged in their play and having fun with their friends. Children were encouraged to freely explore a range of experiences and activities that supported their development and interests.

There was a wide range of open-ended and real life resources which encouraged children to be creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. There was a good balance of planned and spontaneous play opportunities which were in response to their interests.

Numeracy and literacy were promoted throughout the various areas within the playroom. Resources, displays and conversations with staff encouraged children to be curious and naturally explore literacy, numeracy and mathematical concepts during their play. Staff interactions gently encouraged children to extend their play and learning. For example, staff made good use of songs, rhymes and reading stories to encourage children's vocabulary and language skills. Children had the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills and mathematical language while playing with real life resources in the home corner and while taking part in investigative play outdoors.

Planning approaches were responsive to children's interests. We could see how children were consulted and their voices captured in floor books within the playroom. The floor books illustrated how children's interests were extended and developed. Recently children had shown an interest in super heroes. We were able to see how staff had extended and developed the children's interests. There were also wall displays of the children's work linked to their current interests.

Staff understood their role in supporting children's development and were adding further value to children's play and learning through their carefully considered interactions. They were skilled in recognising children's interests and the level of support they needed. Staff naturally engaged with children, showed interest and extended children's learning through meaningful conversations. Effective questioning encouraged children to think independently and to reflect.

Staff were knowledgeable about children's individual development. Observations of children's development and learning were recorded and shared with families. Each child had their own learning journey folder which contained photos, examples of their art work and staff observations and summary of what skills the child had been developing. Children were proud of and enjoyed looking at their individual folders and talking about what they were doing in the photographs.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator 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

Children experienced a clean, bright and welcoming nursery. The playroom was comfortable and homely with plenty of natural light and good ventilation. Ensuring a healthy and safe environment for the children was a priority for the manager and staff. There was a system to report any repairs and damaged items were promptly replaced. There were appropriate risk assessments in place which promoted the safety of the children as well as daily checks of the premises.

Appropriate infection prevention and control practices were in place and minimised the spread of infection. For example, the setting was clean and well maintained. Food safety practices were appropriate and provided good levels of safety for children. We observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing at necessary times.

Although it was a small playroom, staff had created a well thought out, inviting and fun play space with homely touches and cosy areas. The storage of resources supported quality play and learning experiences. Children were able to independently select resources of their choice and lead their own play. We saw children who comfortably moved around the room and were engaged in their play. Some of the children enjoyed painting snowdrops after they had seen them outdoors while others were happy taking part in imaginative play. Later, all the children were engaged while having a story read to them.

Children's safety was well managed as staff were attentive and alert to children's movements. Tools such as updated registers and regular headcounts helped children to move safely around the setting. Children's security and safety was respected because of the measures in place.

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure children and families' personal information was safe and secure. Paperwork was stored securely within locked cupboards. This ensured confidentiality was maintained and complied with best practice guidance.

Staff had a good understanding of the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall health and wellbeing. Nursery children had their own fully enclosed outdoor play area as well as having access to the main school playground and playing field. Due to some remedial work needing to be completed in their outdoor space, it was not possible for the children to use their own outdoor space on the day of the inspection. However, they all enjoyed quality time outdoors in the main school play ground taking part in active play.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The manager and staff fully engaged with the inspection process, demonstrating a positive attitude towards change and improvement. They were motivated and responsive to suggestions made during the inspection to continue to improve outcomes for children and families. There was a positive working environment, where staff felt confident to share ideas to initiate change and were encouraged to share the responsibilities. This was highlighted by the improvements which had been put in place since the previous inspection.

The vision, values and aims of the service were being reviewed and updated to ensure that they reflected the welcoming and community ethos. The manager recognised the importance of including children, families and staff in the process. This will support everyone to know what is important for the service to meet the needs of children and their families.

Following the previous inspection, a requirement had been made in relation to quality assurance. This had been fully actioned. The manager and staff have continued to develop systems of quality assurance to ensure that the quality of the service was monitored and assessed in a focussed and meaningful way. These systems were now embedded and leading to sustained improvements across the service. There was an improvement plan in place which identified key priorities for the following year.

The management team continued to monitor the setting and observe staff practice to ensure children receive high quality play and learning experiences. The management also met with staff to discuss the continuous improvement of the service to secure progression and positive outcomes for children. Team meetings supported staff to develop self-evaluation skills and help to plan for improvement.

The community ethos of the nursery was reflected in the manager's and staff's positive relationships with families. Involving children and their families meaningfully in the continuous improvement of the service contributed to building strong, trusting relationships and them feeling included. Regular communication with families took place through a variety of methods, including daily face to face discussion, questionnaires and online platforms. Parents were also very welcome to spend time in the nursery. The service had reintroduced stay and play sessions which parents all much appreciated.

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The deployment of staff was well managed and effective to meet children's needs. Children were cared for by a consistent staff team who worked well together. The staff team had a balance of skills and experience which were used to promote positive experiences for children across the day.

As a small nursery, staff had established very good working relationships with families. Parents were made to feel very welcome and were encouraged to spend time in the nursery. At drop off and collection times there was opportunity for staff to speak with parents, promoting a sharing of information and ensuring continuity of care. Staff knew the children very well and promoted a very happy and welcoming environment where children were valued and respected. We observed staff being very kind and nurturing in their approach.

Staff worked well together as a team to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. They communicated effectively with each other and worked flexibly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. For example, they communicated with each other if a task took them away from children.

Staff were empowered to deploy themselves and respond to the needs of the children. This enabled staff to follow children's needs and interests without compromising the experiences of others. Transitions were seamless and well planned, with children being comfortable about what was happening next. During busier times of the day, routines had been established which promoted children's safety.

Staff new to the setting were supported through an induction process which assisted them to gain confidence in their new role and meet children's needs. Support was also offered during the regular visits to the playroom by the nursery management team. Team meetings were an opportunity for staff to share skills and knowledge.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 May 2024, the provider must ensure improved outcomes for children and practice by implementing effective systems of quality assurance. To do this the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) regular and effective support and supervision for all staff is implemented
- b) staff are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding around self-evaluation processes and are involved in the systematic evaluation of their work and the work of the service
- c) clear and effective plans are in place for maintaining and improving the service
- d) the management team effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole
- e) clear systems are in place for children and their families to provide feedback and to be actively involved in the evaluation of the service provided.

This is to comply with the Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210). (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/210.

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

This requirement was made on 15 February 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

In response to the requirement, the service had introduced measures to improve systems for quality assurance. They had begun to use self evaluation and audit tools as part of their quality assurance processes. These included a quality assurance calendar to support the service with keeping processes on track. There were opportunities for all relevant stakeholders, including children, families and staff to be included in self evaluation processes. Regular monitoring and observation of practice took place, with feedback provided to staff.

For further information on how the provider had actioned and met the requirement, please refer to Quality indicator 3:1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The requirement had been met.

Met - within timescales

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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very 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 iartras.

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.