

Pennyburn Primary School Early Years Class Day Care of Children

Sundrum Place
Pennyburn
Kilwinning
KA13 6SE

Telephone: 01294 552807

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 January 2025

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003016032

About the service

Pennyburn Primary School Early Years Class is provided by the local authority and is based within Pennyburn Primary School in Kilwinning, North Ayrshire. The service is situated close to public transport links and other local amenities. The early years class comprises of two playrooms, with attached 'quiet' rooms, a lunch room, a canopy area and a fully enclosed outdoor play space. The service is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 52 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of these 52 children, no more than 16 are aged two to under three and no more than 36 are aged three to not yet attending primary school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14, 15 and 16 January 2025 between the hours of 09:00 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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:

- observed and spoke with children using the service
- received completed electronic questionnaires from five families and two staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with a visiting professional.

At the time of inspection there were 63 children registered with the service.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind and caring interactions from staff who knew them well.
- Improvements were required to ensure children benefit from consistent quality of play and learning experiences.
- Children experienced an environment that was warm, bright and welcoming.
- The management team were highly motivated and committed to leading improvements to secure positive outcomes for children and families.
- Staff were kind, caring and communicated well. They supported each other and worked hard to meet children's needs.

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?	3 - Adequate
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?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated different parts of this key question as good and adequate, with an overall grade of adequate. Strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind and caring interactions from staff who knew them well. We observed children happily approaching staff for reassurance and support. Children's needs were met at the right time by staff who could confidently discuss their individual support strategies and preferences. One parent told us, "My child is happy going and feels safe" another stated, "My child is listened to and respected." As a result, children had formed positive relationships and felt safe and secure.

Staff were supported to meet children's care and welfare needs through personal plans and their 'special books.' Most of these contained information around children's preferences, interests, wellbeing needs and next steps. A new format for personal plans had recently been developed. Whilst all staff knew children well, we found some inconsistencies in the quality of information recorded in plans. The management team told us these plans were in the early stages of implementation and had not yet been monitored. The service should continue to embed and monitor the new personal plans to ensure consistent quality of information recorded. All personal plans should clearly detail how staff will support children's individual health and wellbeing needs. There should also be clear plans to support the achievement of their next steps. This would support children to reach their full potential.

Children benefitted from clear individual strategies when additional support was required. Plans had been developed collaboratively with their families and external agencies. We spoke with a visiting professional who praised the team's passion to get it right for every child. We observed staff confidently implementing recorded strategies in practice to support children's health and wellbeing. As a result, there was a positive and inclusive ethos in the service. Medication was stored and administered safely. Staff were knowledgeable around children's health, medical and dietary requirements. This protected children from harm.

Children's health and well-being was promoted through a sociable and unhurried lunchtime. The service had worked hard to make improvements and were still reviewing and developing their mealtimes. Staff sat with children and engaged in meaningful conversations. As a result, children enjoyed a relaxed meal and knew that they mattered. There were some opportunities for children to develop their independence. They cleared their own plates and were encouraged to pour their own drinks. Food trolleys had been purchased and were implemented on day two of the inspection. These encouraged more opportunities for independence and reduced the amount of time children spent waiting. We asked the service to consider ways to improve transitions to and from mealtimes, and supervision during snack time. Whilst interactions were positive, we observed periods of time that staff were focussed on tasks which resulted in children eating unsupervised. This would ensure children are kept safe and enhance the quality of interactions throughout their snack experience.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were settled and busy at play throughout most of the inspection. They moved confidently and easily around the playroom. We observed some missed opportunities to enhance the quality of children's play and learning due to interruptions and a lack of independently accessible resources. For example, on the first day

of our inspection there were no playdoh ingredients at the playdoh station and the home area cupboards were empty. Games and experiences were tidied up while some children were still engaged. We also observed times when children were asked to stop their play or share resources such as playdoh and bubbles when additional resources were available in store cupboards. This meant that children were not always able to enrich their play. We observed some children sitting alone or moving quickly between play spaces with little engagement. Whilst staff were positive and encouraging in their interactions, some children lost interest in play after short periods of time. This meant that experiences did not always spark children's curiosity or offer appropriate challenge.

We discussed the limited accessible resources and lack of provocations to spark children's sense of excitement during the inspection. With support from the management team, significant improvements had been made on the last day of our inspection. All children were engaged in a variety of stimulating and fun experiences. Provocations and resources had been developed and linked to children's interests. For example, playdoh ingredients were available with the addition of party themed resources. A variety of pots, pans, real foods and herbs had been added to the home area and sensory resources been introduced to the water tray. We made an area for improvement at the last inspection to develop high quality play and learning experiences through effective planning, invitations to play and staff interactions. Whilst the service had made improvements, these were not consistent. We discussed supporting the staff team to ensure consistent quality of play and learning experiences every day, for all children. This would provide appropriate challenge and consistently support children to engage meaningfully in their play and learning to reach their full potential. This area for improvement has not been met in full and will be repeated (see outstanding area for improvement 2).

Planning and observation processes had been reviewed and developed since the last inspection to become more responsive to children's interests. These were in the early stages of implementation and we found some gaps, particularly around children's next steps and the monitoring of their progress. The leadership team were aware of these gaps and working hard to support staff to embed the new processes.

There were some opportunities for children to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Children would benefit from holistic opportunities to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills throughout the indoor and outdoor environment. This would help them develop their skills and knowledge through play.

Children and families benefitted from opportunities to develop links with their community. The service had recently re-established book bug, baby massage and 'stay and play' sessions. The service should continue to develop and embed play opportunities for children in their community. This would help them to learn about the world around them.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an environment that was warm, bright and welcoming. Children had plenty of space to play together or alone if they chose to. It was clear to us that children felt an ownership of their space and at ease in their environment. As a result, children were happy and settled. Both playrooms had a separate room attached that had been developed to provide a cosy and quiet space for children. Children were freely able to access these well-furnished rooms throughout the inspection. This meant that children benefitted

from a calm, comfortable area to use to rest, relax and regulate their emotions if required.

Children were cared for in an environment that was well suited to their needs. Furnishings and resources were appropriate for their individual stages of development. These were in good condition and well maintained. As discussed in Quality Indicator 1.3, play spaces could be further developed with a larger quantity of independently accessible resources. This would enhance the play environment to capture children's curiosity, imagination and add depth to their play and learning.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through free flow access to outdoors throughout most of the inspection. One parent told us their child, "enjoys a lot of outdoor play in all weathers." Children had access to a canopy area where we observed children enjoying playing in sand and creating obstacle courses pretending the floor was lava. Outdoors, children were supported to assess their own risk whilst engaging in risky play. Children were laughing and riding bikes down a small slope and support to climb and jump from various heights. This helped children to be active and develop their physical skills while assessing their own limits safely.

Children experience an environment that was clean, well-maintained and clutter free. Overall, children were kept safe through good infection prevention and control measures. We asked the service to remind children to wash their hands when coming in from outdoors and after their lunch. The service purchased an outdoor sink prior to the end of the inspection. This minimised any potential spread of infection and protected children from harm.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had experienced further significant changes and challenges since the last inspection. The new management team were highly motivated and committed to leading improvements to secure positive outcomes for children and families. There were clear service development plans in place and management were realistic about the timescales and manageability of their improvement journey. As a result, significant improvements had been made in a short space of time and there was a positive and proactive ethos in the service.

Staff wellbeing and relationships had been a key focus since the last inspection. All staff felt personally and professionally supported by the management team. One member of staff told us, "The manager is very much aware of myself and all other staff needs and wellbeing. She shows a genuine care and concern for staff and the morale of the team." As a result, staff morale was high.

Collaborative self-evaluation processes were in the early stages of implementation. Staff had met as a team during the most recent in-service day to reflect on areas of service development and identify areas for improvement. We could see where consultation with staff had led to change, for example, changes to lunch timings. One staff member told us, "I have seen great positive changes and the impact this has had on the staff team. I feel the QI (quality improvement) journey has just begun but has a clear path of progression." As a result, staff had a positive outlook on change and improvement and felt included. Most staff felt they would benefit from more opportunities to meet as a team to reflect and engage in professional discussions. Plans had been developed for staff to meet regularly in small teams, as well as protected time for key

working and planning. These were due to be implemented the week of inspection. As a result, staff felt valued and listened to.

Families had been consulted on their views. One parent told us, "The nursery is always looking for our opinions and what makes the service good and what could be better." Thoughts and suggestions had been gathered via questionnaires. We discussed using this feedback to inform improvements and communicating the outcome of their suggestions to families. This would ensure that children and families know they are at the heart of improvement planning.

Whilst the new manager was pro-active in development of robust quality assurance processes, auditing and monitoring systems were not yet established across all areas of service delivery. This led to some inconsistencies as discussed in quality indicator 1.1 and 1.3 of this report. We made an area for improvement around quality assurance at the last inspection. Whilst the service had made a large number of improvements in a short period of time, the area for improvement had not yet been met in full and will be repeated (see outstanding area for improvement 3). We were confident in the capacity of the service to continue to develop and embed their quality assurance processes. This would help create a continuous cycle of improvement to support positive outcomes for children and families.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

The service had experienced recent significant changes to their staff team. The management had recognised the importance of developing strong, trusting relationships across the new team. This had a positive impact on staff wellbeing. Staff had an optimistic outlook on change and improvement. They were kind, caring and communicated well. They worked hard to meet children's needs, providing support to each other when required. As a result, children's care and wellbeing needs were met at the right time.

Improvements had been made to information sharing with families and parents spoke highly of the staff team. One parent told us, "The staff do an amazing job and identify my children's needs very well, very happy with the service." Another parent stated, "All the staff are great. Easy to approach and help with anything needed." Information was shared via newsletters, notice boards, children's progress meetings and communication diaries if requested. Parents were welcomed into the playroom during drop off and collection times. We observed staff and families chatting informally. As a result, most families felt included in their children's day and had opportunities to form positive, trusting relationships with staff. Some parents told us they would like more regular updates. Plans to share information through 'seesaw' which is an online communication application were in place. This will enhance communication to help all parents feel included.

The management and senior leadership team provided support in playrooms when required, and covered unplanned staff absences. It was clear to us that children felt at ease in their presence and had formed positive relationships. As a result, they were always cared for by familiar staff and felt secure. At times during our inspection, staff deployment impacted on the quality of children's experiences. Particularly, during snack, and for periods of time in the playroom where some children would have benefited from more adult support to enhance the quality of their play and learning. The service recognised this and were considering ways to ensure children benefit from consistent quality of experiences throughout the day. This

would support children to reach their full potential.

There was a good mix of staff skills, knowledge and experience. These had been considered in the deployment of staff across playrooms and areas. Staff could discuss each others strengths and professional interests, highlighting how these could be used to support each other. This promoted a culture of collaboration in the team. Staff benefitted from recently introduced opportunities to meet individually with management to reflect on their practice, celebrate successes and identify areas for development. We asked the service to continue to embed these processes and monitor the impact. This would support staff to develop confidence in their professional autonomy and enhance positive outcomes for children and families.

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 support children's wellbeing, independence and opportunities for high-quality social engagement and learning in a calm and relaxed environment, the service should ensure that mealtimes are reviewed and improved.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I can enjoy unhurried meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

This area for improvement was made on 8 February 2024.

Action taken since then

The service had worked hard to make improvements to their mealtimes. The lunch room was calm and relaxed. Staff sat with children and engaged in meaningful conversations. Children had opportunities to develop their independence skills. Mealtimes were still being monitored to further enhance children's mealtime experience.

This area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To improve outcomes for children, the service should develop high quality play and learning experiences that are interesting, stimulating and fun. Planning, resources and staff interactions should add depth, progression and challenge to all aspects of children's play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials'

(HSCS 1.31) and 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 8 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Planning approaches had been reviewed and were more responsive to children's interests. A new system for recording observations and monitoring children's progress had also been developed. These were in the early stages of implementation and not yet embedded. Whilst the service had made improvements in relation to the development of high quality play and learning experiences that were stimulating, interesting and fun, improvements were not consistent. We discussed supporting the staff team to ensure consistent quality of play and learning experiences every day, for all children. This would provide appropriate challenge and consistently support children to engage meaningfully in their play and learning to reach their full potential.

This area for improvement was not met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To develop a cycle of continuous improvement, the service should develop robust and sustainable quality assurance and monitoring processes with clear priorities, actions and timescales. This should involve self-evaluation that meaningfully includes children, their families and the staff team.

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 area for improvement was made on 8 February 2024.

Action taken since then

There had been significant changes to the staff and management team. As a result, quality assurances and monitoring processes were not yet embedded to enable us to assess their impact and sustainability. The manager was pro-active in the development of robust systems for quality assurance. Self-evaluation processes with staff and families were in the early stages of implementation and were beginning to influence positive changes in the service. Auditing and monitoring systems were being developed, these were not yet established across all areas of service delivery. The service had made a large number of improvements in a short period of time and were making good progress to meet this area for improvement in full.

This area for improvement was not met.

Previous area for improvement 4

The service provider and manager should ensure there are appropriate numbers of staff to meet the individual care needs of children across the day.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My needs are met by the right number of people" (HSCS 3.15) and 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 8 February 2024.

Action taken since then

The management and senior leadership team provided support in playrooms when needed and covered unplanned staff absences. Staff worked hard to meet children's individual needs, communicating well and providing support to each other when required.

This area for improvement was met.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
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 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.