

New Stevenston Primary Nursery Class Day Care of Children

Coronation Road East
New Stevenston
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 January 2025

Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000237

Service no:
CS2003015400

About the service

New Stevenston Primary School Nursery Class is a service provided by North Lanarkshire Council. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children, aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

At the time of inspection, 57 children were registered with the service.

The service consists of an open plan playroom which could be divided with a screen should this be required. There was direct access to an outdoor area and toilets. Children have access to areas within the school including the dining hall, and gym.

The nursery is situated in a housing estate which is serviced by a regular bus route, and is close to local shops and amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 and 22 January 2025 between 09:15 and 15:30.

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:

- spoke with some of children using the service
- gathered the feedback from nine family members of children using the service
- spoke with staff and management present on the days we visited the service
- gathered written feedback from four staff using a survey
- observed staff practice and children's experiences on the days of our visit
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children experienced positive, nurturing relationships with staff.

Children enjoyed playing outdoors and were supported to dress suitably for the weather conditions.

To improve the quality of children's play experiences, work was needed to develop play materials and experiences provided.

Medication procedures needed improved to ensure children's health and wellbeing needs were met.

To ensure better consistency in the quality of children's experiences, quality assurance systems should be further developed.

Children's progress was recorded regularly in journals, this supported monitoring of development and identifying next steps

Staff were respectful in their interactions with each other, the children and their families.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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

Parents and children were welcomed into the service by friendly and approachable staff. One parent said: "They have an open door policy where we can approach them about literally anything to do with the kids and the nursery". This allowed parents to see the children at play and interacting with others, helping to foster positive relationships which ensured families felt valued and respected.

Staff knew children well. Personal plans were kept up to date. Staff used these to record children's experiences in nursery, and to identify next steps in their journey. We discussed developing more reflective practice to identify and evaluate children's learning. This would further develop the opportunities to challenge their learning and facilitate interesting play opportunities.

The service worked alongside other professionals such as the NHS oral health improvement service, child smile and social work. This ensured children were provided with the right care, tailored to their individual needs.

Staff were gentle and considerate in their interactions, offering physical comfort when needed. Where children required support with personal care, such as nappy changing or a change of clothes, interactions were warm and respectful. This supported children to feel safe and nurtured by staff who cared.

Children were able to help themselves to water, to stay hydrated, throughout the day. Jugs in the snack area were an enabling opportunity where children could self-serve. This promoted autonomy and the feeling of empowerment as the children made their own decisions.

The service should consider improving lunchtime experiences for children. All children were familiar with the routine of moving from nursery to the school dining room to eat. Children were encouraged to choose who, from their own group, they sat beside, and children were supported by staff. This meant that children experienced a sociable mealtime within their established groups. However, children were unable to make choices outside of their group regarding who to sit beside and did not have the opportunity to choose or self-serve their lunch. Improvements were needed to ensure children experienced a nurturing environment where their choices were not limited. This would support the children in learning new skills while having positive social interactions with a wider range of their peers. Further information on providing quality mealtimes could be found on the Care Inspectorate hub.

Medication was stored out of children's reach to ensure their safety. However, we found that records of administration were incomplete and not audited regularly, requiring improvement. The service agreed to address this. We were confident this would be actioned as a priority by the leadership team, contributing to the safety of the children

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

The pace of the day allowed children to explore the areas and have some time for uninterrupted play, however more opportunities for children to lead their own play were needed. At times, adult led activities interrupted children's play which limited opportunities for children to choose where and how they engaged with activities. Providing more opportunities for uninterrupted play will promote independence, exploration and self-directed learning.

Children were having fun with the resources available, they particularly enjoyed playing in the water and outdoors. Choices and opportunities to direct their own learning through natural curiosity were restricted due to the limited materials on offer. We discussed this with senior staff in the nursery who made improvements on the second day of inspection. We were satisfied that these changes impacted positively on children. Children were more engaged and more involved in imaginative play. Children told us they were happy with the increased resources with one stating "there is so much out, it's great". The service should continue reviewing and responding to the toys and materials needed to support children's learning and progression.

We found there were limited opportunities for children to explore early literacy and numeracy materials. The service should review their environment to ensure children are offered rich learning opportunities which include access to resources which inspire and challenge children. This would support children to develop curiosity and lead their own learning.

A children's committee had been established to ensure children's voices were heard throughout the planning process. This was a positive start in incorporating children's interests in their play and learning. We encouraged staff to respond to children's requests in a timely manner to maximise their meaningful participation. This would contribute to the children feeling valued, and encourage further participation.

Children benefited from free flow play, with access to the outdoor area available for most of the day. Children were supported to wear outdoor clothing, provided by the service, which ensured children's comfort in all weathers. The outdoor area offered opportunities for children to participate in physical play which included climbing and ball play. The area would benefit from some development to include opportunities for children to explore open-ended materials and sheltered, cosy areas. This would allow children to choose with and how they play, responding to their needs and preferences.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Overall, children received care in a safe and secure environment. The front entrance had a secure entry system and staff were vigilant, only permitting those known to them to enter the building. This led into a bright cloakroom where children had their own spaces to keep their personal items. Information for families was displayed in this area, as well as displays of the children's work. We noted that these would benefit from being updated to ensure that children who currently attended were helped to feel valued, and develop a sense of belonging within the setting. On the first day of the inspection the emergency exit gate from the garden could be easily opened. This had the potential to compromise children's safety. When we raised this with staff, immediate action was taken. We were satisfied that measures were put in place as a result of that to keep children safe

The playroom benefited from natural lighting which was complemented in darker areas by low lighting. The resources were clean and presentable. Children were proud to show us around their nursery telling us "I love drawing" and "I need my wellies on to go outside".

Most play spaces needed to be improved to provide an enriched learning environment. Overall, more toys and materials were needed to spark children's interest in play and learning. Whilst some resources were added to the playroom on the second day of inspection, more were needed to consistently challenge children.. An environmental audit might help staff to identify any gaps in provision. Enabling environments offer children security, comfort, choice, engagement and opportunity. To ensure that children's choice, play opportunities and engagement are supported through an engaging environment, we have made an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1)

While some cosy spaces were available, further development was needed both inside and out. Current provision required softer furnishings, materials and resources to support emotional regulation. Developing these spaces would help children develop the skills necessary to manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. This would ultimately lead to improving their ability to navigate social situations, learn effectively, and achieve overall well-being.

Staff and children demonstrated good handwashing practices, and staff support was readily available, this contributed to minimising any potential spread of infection. The service benefitted from two independently accessible toilet areas. The flooring in both toilet areas showed signs of wear and tear which could lead to a possible contamination risk. Additionally, one of the toilet areas was next to the snack area. The door to this area should be closed to minimise risk of contamination of food from spores. The management team offered reassurances the flooring had already been addressed and they would ensure the door was closed at all times, we were satisfied with these reassurances..

The service had previously good links with the community, visiting local parks and woodland. Due to current staffing challenges staff found it more difficult to participate in visits out with the nursery. Community connections in early years help children feel safe, develop a sense of belonging, and learn about their local area. These connections can also help children transition into community life later on.

Parents shared that they found communication from the service to be lacking and often found out about activities when their child told them. We shared these findings with the management team who agreed to review their communication strategy. This would allow parents to engage with the service and work in partnership with staff to deliver care and support to children.

Personal information was stored securely. This helped to ensure the service complied with data protection laws, and contributed to keeping children safe.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure the children have access to a well resourced environment.

This should include, but not be limited to:

- providing more toys and materials that meet children's needs and interests.

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

states that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigating and problem solving, including through imaginative play and story telling' (HSCS 1.30).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

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

Leaders engaged positively with inspectors during our visit and were confident, open and professional in their discussion. Staff were motivated to make positive changes to improve experiences for children.

The service improvement plan focused on developing the outdoor area and parental engagement. Whilst these were important development areas, the targets within the plan were broad which made it difficult for staff to achieve. We suggested revisiting these as a team to identify key areas where improvements could be made to the quality of children's care and experiences.

Some monitoring processes impacted positively on children's care. However more robust procedures were needed to help identify key development areas within the service. This includes, the quality of the play environment. We asked the management team to support staff to do these tasks effectively. This would support the staff's learning, and understanding to ensure positive outcomes for children. To ensure children have positive experiences through quality assurance and self evaluation processes, we have made an area for improvement. (See area for improvement 1).

Management had made positive attempts to consult with families about the quality of the service. However, several parents and carers shared with us that they would like to be more meaningfully involved in developing the service. As a result, we suggested that consultation methods were widened to meet the varying communication styles of children and families

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should develop and embed robust quality assurance and self-evaluation processes.

This should include, but is not limited to

- auditing medication, ensuring records are clear, accurate and up to date
- reviewing accidents and incidents to identify patterns and adjust environment as appropriate
- undertaking observations of children's engagement and staff practice.

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

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

Staff engaged well with us throughout our visit. We saw a well established team that worked professionally and supported each other. They were kind, caring and affectionate and worked well together. This meant that children received nurturing person-centred care and support.

Staff told us, deployment at times, had been challenging, and on occasion had left them feeling that better continuity in the staff team was needed. On the week of the inspection we found child to adult ratios were being followed. Teachers from the school had been used to cover nursery staff absences, and children's needs were being met. The staff communicated well and deployed themselves appropriately throughout the day. Most staff knew the children and responded appropriately to their individual needs. This made it clear that care and support was consistent because people worked together.

The staff had children and families at the heart of what they did. They truly cared for them and wanted to provide a service which ensured the children the best possible start in life. They should continue to use the strength of their training and the opportunity to use best practice publications to help reflect on the quality of the play space and support offered to children and families.

New staff were supported by a mentor, and encouraged to engage with the national induction resource. This ensured that staff had the breadth of knowledge and skills to provide quality care and learning experiences for children.

Staff told us they felt supported by the immediate leaders in the nursery, describing them as "supportive and approachable". Effective monitoring of staff practice would support the confidence of the team, allowing them to be better able to provide the tailored experiences they knew children required for their development.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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