

Raasay Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Raasay Primary School
Isle of Raasay
IV40 8PB

Telephone: 01478 660 219

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 April 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017259

About the service

Raasay Primary School Nursery is located close to the village of Inverarish on the Isle of Raasay, within the Eilean a'Cheò area of Highland Council. The service is registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of six children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school. Two children were present at the time of the inspection.

Children have access to an indoor nursery playroom which is located within Raasay Primary School. The nursery have their own designated reception area, kitchen and toilet facilities as well as direct access to an outdoor area which is shared with the school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 April 2025 between 09:00 and 15:15. 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 two children using the service;
- spoke with two staff and the manager;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from one family;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment;
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors;
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met; and
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Staff supported children's care and learning routines with kindness and compassion which contributed to the development of strong and trusting relationships.
- Children's choices were supported very well through a balance of planned and spontaneous play experiences and resources.
- Play experiences across the nursery supported the development of children's language, literacy and numeracy.
- Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through strong connections to their own and wider communities.
- Children benefitted from regular outdoor play experiences which supported them to be active and healthy.
- Families were actively involved in contributing to the development of the service.
- Effective leadership and quality assurance processes supported the ongoing development of the service.
- Very good staff deployment arrangements supported positive outcomes for children.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very 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

Staff supported children's care and learning routines with kindness and compassion which contributed to the development of strong and trusting relationships. Children were confident and happy within the setting. Staff knew the children well which meant they were able to respond to their individual needs and preferences. One parent commented: "Staff are professional and have a good relationship with children and parents, they keep us informed and children like to spend time with them". These positive relationships helped to nurture children's security and confidence within the service.

Children benefited from their families being warmly welcomed into the service. Families had been consulted and their ideas used to support children's transition into the nursery. The service operated an open door policy which also contributed to families feeling welcomed. Establishing strong relationships with families was important to the manager and staff. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time as well as online updates. One parent commented that: "There are regular opportunities to meet with staff", and "Staff always happy to discuss things with parents". This enabled opportunities for information to be shared between nursery and home to support children's ongoing learning and development needs.

Children's overall wellbeing was promoted through effective personal planning. This was carried out in collaboration with families and partners to promote consistency and continuity in care. Staff spoke confidently and knowledgeably about the care needs of children and implemented strategies to support them. As a result, all children received well-planned care and support to meet their individual needs

Children benefited from high quality snack and lunchtime experiences which promoted opportunities to develop their independence and skills for life. For example, during snack, children set the table, poured their own drinks and prepared and served their own food. The children in the service joined the school for lunch and benefited from this positive social experience. This was a relaxing and sociable time for children where they were provided with opportunities to develop their social skills and independence. The lunch choices were healthy, nutritious and locally sourced which the children were aware of and talked about. At both snack and lunchtimes, staff sat with children which provided opportunities to promote close attachments and develop language skills. As a result, children were nurtured through their daily experiences.

Whilst no children attending the service required any long term medication, we reviewed the systems in place for this. We were satisfied that safe administration of medication procedures were in place, to help ensure children's health needs could be met.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were engaged in play experiences that were meaningful and relevant. They were actively leading their play and learning through planned and spontaneous experiences which promoted their choice and independence. Children were able to follow their interests indoors or outdoors. We observed children having fun engaged in dramatic play indoors where they used resources to dress up as a fire fighter and doctor. They commented as they played: "You've got a fever!", "There's bacteria in it...I can hear your heartbeat", and "We need to get to safety!". As well as this, staff actively listened and responded to

children's changing interests throughout the day. For example, they provided provocations to develop small world play with cars and shared prompts and resources to support role play when the children chose to create their own meals in the home corner. These responsive approaches successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning.

Play experiences across the nursery supported the development of children's language, literacy and numeracy. The children in the service were able to practice and develop their emerging writing skills with mark making across the indoor and outdoor spaces. Examples of children's mark making were valued, displayed within the service and used to support aspects of the day to day routine such as planning learning. Regular sharing of stories, songs and rhymes in interesting contexts ensured children had the opportunity to revisit familiar texts and consolidate their learning. This supported the development of their talking and listening skills.

Children's access to loose parts outdoors supported opportunities to develop key numeracy skills. For example, the availability of water and sand afforded them opportunities to explore capacity and weight. While children used these resources, staff included a range of mathematical language, related to size, position and number, within their interactions to extend children's thinking. These experiences supported children to learn key numeracy skills through their everyday play and learning.

Throughout the inspection, staff used skilled interactions to support the children's learning and development. Staff carefully observed play and timed interactions to create a balance of opportunities which allowed the children to investigate for themselves and notice the moments they were more receptive to support. While sharing a story together, staff posed open questions which encouraged inquiry such as "I wonder what will happen next?", which extended the children's ability to verbalise their thoughts and actions. As a result children were supported to widen their skills and consolidate their learning through play.

Planning approaches within the service were children centred and responsive to children's interests and life experiences. This session, the service had identified the need to develop staff confidence around using effective planning approaches. As a result, staff were in the early stages of using a floor book approach to plan learning and were developing other digital and paper based approaches to document and track children's progress. Staff were confident to talk about children's progress and were developing their skills to record high quality observations and plan next steps in learning. Further development of observation and planning approaches would support a consistent approach in this area across the service.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through strong connections to their own and wider communities. The nursery children regularly took part in supporting initiatives within the community. This included supporting community lunches with residents of Raasay. They also took an active role in a composting project led by the school and nursery to support residents in the nearby area to compost food waste. As well as this they benefited from learning about planting and growing food and harvested apples from the school and nursery garden to sell to the community. These unique opportunities promoted and developed children's skills of responsibility, enterprise and sustainability and helped them to contribute positively to their local community.

In addition, the service had strong connections to members of the community who shared their skills and knowledge with the children. Visits from the Police, Fire Service and Community Nurse enhanced learning around a recent interest in 'People Who Help Us'. Children had also benefitted from a visit to the local ferry where they learned more about how it operated. Children told us: "I could see from upstairs", and "I pressed the ramp down!". As a result, children were supported to develop an understanding of their community, sense of place and develop skills for life.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

After being in an inactive period for two years, the service was working to develop the quality of the environment for children within the service. The manager and staff had worked closely with the local authority early years team to develop and improve some aspects of provision. This had included adding new furniture and resources to support sand and water play. As a result, the indoor playroom was comfortable, welcoming and furnished to a good standard. It offered plenty of natural light and ventilation and direct access to an outdoor area. This ensured children had ample space for their needs and the choice to play indoors or outdoors.

The layout of the indoor environment enabled children to access a good range of resources independently and lead their own play. Children benefited from cosy spaces to rest and relax which supported their overall well-being. Indoors, a quiet space with soft furnishings was used by children to read books and rest. As well as this, the indoor space was structured to reflect children's interests and stages of development and learning. We observed children having fun as they engaged in imaginative role play using emergency vehicle resources they had made from junk modelling materials. Other resources such as arts and crafts materials, construction resources and a well-resourced home corner café provided some interesting invitations for children to play and opportunities for them to be creative and use their imagination. As a result, children were engaged in play experiences which captured their interest and promoted their curiosity. Children had access to some open ended materials and loose parts to support their play. We spoke with the manager about how this could be extended to add depth and further develop opportunities to engage children's natural curiosity.

Children benefitted from free-flow play between the indoor and outdoor area which supported them to be active and healthy. The outdoor space, included a pond, natural wooded area with fruit trees, a polytunnel and an open grassy space to run, explore, ride bikes and develop their gross motor skills. Children took an active role in growing and planting food and flowers and we observed them proudly taking responsibility for watering plants and talking about what they needed to grow. Children commented: "It's a baby plant." and "I do mine all by myself!". As a result, children were provided with interesting opportunities to support their play and learning outdoors.

Almost all infection prevention and control procedures supported a safe environment for the children and staff. The environment was clean and children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. However, the sink for handwashing in the indoor playroom was also being used to wash messy play items. This did not meet best practice guidance as set out in "Space to grow and thrive: Design guidance for early learning and childcare and school age childcare setting". **(See area for improvement 1).**

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and healthy and to promote their wellbeing, the provider should ensure suitable facilities are in place to enable effective handwashing to take place within the indoor playroom.

This is to ensure that infection prevention and control practices are consistent with the Public Health Scotland document: Health protection in children and young people settings, including education.

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had developed a clear vision, values and aims which included the views of staff, children and families. This had been developed collaboratively across the nursery and school and linked strongly with their unique community context. Values based on the well-being indicators underpinned children's breadth of experiences and positively informed practice across the service.

The views of children and families were actively sought to inform the development of the service. Daily conversations with children and regular consultation enabled children to express their interests, likes, and dislikes. This was reflected in the resources available for play which took account of their interests. This helped children feel valued and included in the service.

Families were asked to contribute their views about provision and took part in transition visits before the nursery re-opened this session. Their views were added to a mind map and displayed in the nursery entrance area which visually highlighted to families how their voice was valued and used to influence change within the service. Some of their ideas included, providing opportunities for children to cook, bake and learn alongside the school pupils. Many of these ideas had been acted on and developed as the session has progressed. Nursery families were also involved in the Parent Council forum and had supported with the organisation and fundraising for specific musical and cultural events as well as trips. We found this promoted inclusion and allowed families regular opportunities to be involved and contribute towards positive change within the nursery.

Quality assurance processes were in place to ensure aspects of the service were routinely monitored. The manager used a quality assurance calendar to plan aspects of monitoring throughout the year. The manager spent time with the staff and children to monitor the setting and observe staff practice to ensure children received high quality play and learning experiences. The nursery were included as part of the whole school improvement planning process which identified key areas for change. Current priorities included developing children's early writing and reading skills and actions towards achieving these were regularly reviewed and evaluated. We observed the positive impact of some of the changes in terms of the diverse range of opportunities which had been developed for children to enjoy and experience stories. This supported a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement and promoted positive outcomes for children.

Effective self-evaluation enabled the service to deliver high-quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices. Staff reported that they felt well supported and motivated to do the very best for the children and families in the service. They shared that they regularly met with the manager to reflect together using best practice guidance and used these reflections to bring about positive change to outcomes for children and families. Staff also reported that they had benefitted

from taking part in a small isles network of services to support self-evaluation. This had provided them with opportunities to look outwards, engage in professional dialogue with colleagues, reflect on practice and improve experiences for children.

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. Staff were enthusiastic and committed to providing a positive experience for the children in their care. They were warm, friendly and responsive in their approach which supported children to feel valued and loved. One parent commented: "The children are happy to go and well cared for with good opportunities to play and learn".

Very good numbers of staff were deployed to meet the children's needs across the day both indoors and outdoors and the staff team worked together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. For example, the staff team communicated well when a task took them away from a specific area or the needs of children changed. The ethos between team members was positive and interactions between staff were kind and respectful. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children to feel comfortable and secure in.

New staff had received an induction, which covered important information needed to care for children as well as important policies and procedures. Staff commented that they felt supported in their role and enjoyed working in the nursery. Staff development reviews were conducted in a collaborative way and were linked to the service priorities as well as the personal development goals of staff. More experienced staff used their skills and expertise to provide helpful guidance to newer staff which contributed to a supportive and inclusive ethos and ensured children's needs were met.

As part of developing meaningful play and learning opportunities and widening experiences for children, the staff team had facilitated a variety of collaborative visits and events within the local community and wider school. Staff were flexible in adapting routines at this time and worked proactively to ensure these experiences could be facilitated. As a result, children were provided with enhanced social experiences and opportunities to be meaningfully connected to their local community.

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?	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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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