

Foula ELC Day Care of Children

Shetland

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
5 May 2025

Service provided by:
Shetland Islands Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002063

Service no:
CS2004065020

About the service

Foula ELC is a day care of children service. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of six children from two years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of those no more than one is aged under three years. There was one child present during the inspection.

Care is provided in a designated nursery room within the primary school. Nursery children have shared use of the kitchen/dining area and the community hall for physical play sessions. They also access a large outdoor play area from the nursery room. Here they can use various physical play equipment and a "polycrub" (polytunnel) which they use for planting and growing.

About the inspection

This was an announced virtual inspection which took place between 28 April and 2 May 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 and complaint 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
- received two completed questionnaires from parents and staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The child benefitted from a close bond with staff and pupils in the school.
- Learning was individualised for the child, reflecting their current interests and curiosities.
- Good use was made of the local area, including "daily wanders" which supported the child's health and wellbeing through regular outdoor activities.
- Improvements were planned and implemented to promote positive experiences for children, the manager had recognised the need to streamline these and focus on priority areas going forward.
- Staff deployment enabled a continuity of care for children while ensuring that staff had breaks, supporting the wellbeing of staff and 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?	5 - Very 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 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

Warm, nurturing and caring interactions supported the children's wellbeing. Children were supported with patience and kindness to engage in their activities. Time was given for them to complete tasks, such as putting on shoes themselves, promoting their independence. Staff knew the children, their preferences and interests well. Privacy and dignity was supported through gentle reminders about toilet visits and positive role modelling for personal hygiene such as handwashing.

Children brought packed lunches from home and the school and nursery children ate these together in the dining area. The lunches were served onto plates, promoting a more homely experience. Children were able to serve some of their own food and water, supporting choice and independence. Staff sat with the children, promoting their interactions and offering support when needed. Discussions at these times were led by the children with staff participating, promoting a relaxed and sociable experience. Staff were focused on the children, promoting their safety as they were able to respond to any emergency such as choking.

Although no one currently needed a regular nap, their wellbeing was promoted as staff understood the impact of tiredness. Areas were available for children to rest and relax. If children did sleep, they lay on the rug or in the den and blankets and cushions were used to promote their comfort. We advised that sleep mats should be available if children needed to sleep. The use of these ensures an ease of cleaning and minimises any risk of infection.

Personal plans were in place which clearly detailed the children's needs, interests and strategies of support. These were reviewed regularly with parents meaning that information was up to date and relevant. Currently no children needed medication. Processes were in place such as safe storage, appropriate record keeping and a policy to promote children's safety should medication be necessary.

The manager and practitioner had made links with other agencies and nurseries to promote peer relationships for children and support their confidence and social skills. They worked with the local authority to establish positive links which would promote a continuity of care for the children.

Children were kept safe as the manager and practitioner had a clear understanding of their role in identifying, recording and referring any concerns. A policy was in place to support this and raise awareness with parents. Children's wellbeing was supported as there was an awareness of factors which could impact negatively on children and families. For example, social isolation.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were happy and engaged in their activities. They took pride and pleasure in telling us about their recent projects and showing us items collected from the daily wander. A balance of spontaneous and planned play and learning promoted this engagement. This was individualised for the children and reflected their interests and how they had been extended. Invitations to play engaged the children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. For example, a child's interest in turtles had been used to discover other

animals and consider their habitats. This had led to researching different countries and considering travel. As a result, children were progressing well and were happy and confident.

The nursery room was inviting and stimulating for children, encouraging them to explore and learn. Displays and resources reflected children's current interests and included children's work to promote their sense of ownership. Children's literacy, language and numeracy skills were promoted through skilled interactions as well as access to a range of resources. These included a variety of books, mark making opportunities, tools to measure and compare and environmental print.

The practitioner had a good understanding of child development and play theory. They used this to support high quality play and learning experiences which promoted children's learning. Interactions with children supported them to imagine, consider and problem solve. For example, extending discussions about the bubbles in the water dispenser or asking children about the cheese they had for lunch.

Regular observations were recorded of children's learning and were used to plan to extend the children's experiences. Next steps were identified as well as strategies to support children to achieve them. A system to track children's progress was in place, supporting the practitioner to plan for any gaps in learning. This supported children's progression and confidence through a sense of achievement.

The school was very much part of the local community. Children accessed amenities and resources within the community. Children's understanding and interest in the local heritage was supported through their participation in storytelling and links with other agencies. One example of this was the weekly community walks led by the Foula Ranger staff. This led to children feeling valued and part of their community.

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

The nursery was well furnished and welcoming, it was well ventilated with lots of natural light. The use of rugs, carpet, blankets and cushions promoted children's comfort and provided a homely feel to the room. There was ample space for children's needs, with space to play and to safely store their belongings. This gave children the message that they were valued.

The nursery areas were well structured and took account of children's stage of development and current interests. There were comfy areas and different zones to access a variety of resources and activities. Resources were well labelled and stored to maximise children's independent access. This supported their choice and ability to lead their own play. Displays and resources were changed as children's interests changed and progressed. For example, the role play area had previously been used as a map shop when children were interested in travel. It was now being used as a haberdashery to reflect interest in fabric and clothing design.

The outdoor area was accessed from the playroom, further supporting children's choice in where to play. There was space and resources here to invite active play as well as opportunities for planting and growing. Planned development of the dedicated nursery area was ongoing, with support from local community. Recently a small "round house" had been built to provide an option for shelter at children's suggestion. Daily wanders, walks around the local community, extended children's experience of the outdoors and

physical exercise. Plans were in place to further develop the outdoor space to support children's skills in numeracy and literacy.

Children's safety was promoted as any hazards in the environment had been identified. This had been recorded as well as the details of mitigating actions to reduce the risk of harm. Children had been involved in carrying out daily checks and risk assessments for the outdoors. This helped them become aware of how to keep themselves safe. The manager and staff were working to capture children's voice in the risk assessments.

Children's health was promoted as infection prevention and control measures were in place. This included regular handwashing at appropriate times and the cleaning of surfaces. Rhymes and songs were used to support children's participation and understanding of these processes.

Children and their family's privacy was protected as information was stored securely. This included locked files for paper records and password protection for information held digitally.

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 vision, values and aims of the nursery were included in those for the whole school. Parents and other stakeholders had been involved in a recent review of these. This supported everyone to know what was important to meet the needs of children.

The manager and practitioner worked well together in an atmosphere of collaboration and support. This promoted confidence to make suggestions and a shared responsibility for change and the progress of improvements.

Because of the island location the school and nursery were very much part of the community. This promoted family involvement in the development of the setting. Successes and developments were regularly shared with children, their families and the wider community. Parents and children had opportunities to provide feedback and make suggestions to inform planned improvements.

There was an ethos of continuous improvement within the setting, supporting positive outcomes and experiences for children. National guidance and good practice documents were used to inform the self-evaluation of the service. This helped staff to provide care which was based on most recent research and guidance. The self-evaluation had fed into an improvement plan to support the effective management of change. The manager had acknowledged that this needed streamlining so that improvements could be prioritised. While most of the changes had been evaluated, to ensure they had the intended positive outcome on children's experiences, a few had not. Going forward the manager should ensure that changes are consistently evaluated.

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

Staff worked well in the uncommon circumstances of a very small setting to identify and meet the needs of children. The practitioner and manager worked and communicated well with each other, sharing skills and experiences within their roles.

A continuity of care was promoted due to the close working relationships of staff. Relief staff were occasionally used and where possible were familiar to the children. Children's wellbeing was prioritised when considering transitions, this included times within the routine of the setting as well as when starting nursery or primary school.

Children benefitted from the relaxed and happy atmosphere the manager and practitioner created. There was lots of discussion between the manager and practitioner to ensure positive experiences for children if tasks took the practitioner away. This included at busier times such as mealtimes, promoting children's safety and continued positive experiences.

Support was available for the practitioner to attend training, resulting in children benefitting from fresh ideas and enthusiasm. This included attending meetings with practitioners from other services, providing opportunities for mentoring and sharing of knowledge.

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?	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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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