

Heathery Knowe Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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East Kilbride
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Heathery Knowe Primary School Nursery Class is a daycare of children service and is registered to provide care to 42 children not yet attending primary school. The service is located in a residential area of The Murray, East Kilbride.

Children are cared for in one dedicated playroom with access to toilets and an enclosed outdoor garden. Children also have access to the school playground to support outdoor play. The service is close to schools, local shops, transport links and green spaces.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 and 11 September 2024 between 09:00 and 17:00. 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:

- spoke with children using the service and 14 of their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced interactions filled with kindness, patience and warmth. This helped children feel loved and secure.
- Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried, helping children to enjoy eating their meals with their peers.
- Minor changes to medication systems would help ensure processes were robust in administering medicine.
- Children experienced lots of uninterrupted play, helping to support their interests and learning.
- The environment had been redeveloped to reflect a warm and cosy homely environment. This helped children feel they mattered.
- Quality assurance systems in place helped identify areas for improvement needed within the service. This helped shape a shared vision between leaders and staff.
- Daily routines had been reviewed to reflect the needs of children and to support their development.

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

Children were happy, confident and settled within the environment. Staff interacted with children in a kind, nurturing and caring way, helping them to feel safe and loved. Staff were responsive to children's cues and requests, helping them to feel valued. For example, when they needed help to put on their shoes and jackets or when they needed additional resources to support them in their play.

Positive relationships had been developed between children and families, helping staff to get to know them and build a strong feeling of connectedness, trust and involvement. Parents commented positively on this and told us "the staff are great at welcoming my child every day", and "[my child] has developed such a trusting and meaningful relationship with [staff member]".

Personal plans were in place for each child and these contained important information to help staff become familiar with children and to help meet their individual needs. This information included likes, dislikes, and any comforters children needed. The service had identified that personal plans were an ongoing area of development, focusing on how these could be better organised in a way that is easily accessible and manageable. We agreed reviewing these would help ensure plans supported staff when meeting children's needs.

Mealtimes were enjoyable experiences for children, with staff sitting alongside engaging in chatter and promoting good supervision, supporting safe eating. Staff engaged in conversations with children that reflected their interests. For example, discussing different foods and tastes. Lunchtime experiences had been redeveloped and improved to help ensure this was calm, relaxing and unhurried for children. Their independence and development of life skills were supported through serving their own meal and the availability of child size crockery. For example, small jugs and cups meant children could pour their own drinks. The newly developed lunch routine meant that not all children went for lunch at once, reducing the potential for children to wait in a queue too long to have their meal. One child told us "I love the toast for snack time."

Medication systems were reviewed and overall reflected current best practice. We suggested some minor changes to help ensure this was fully robust. For example, ensuring paperwork included signs and symptoms, to help ensure staff are aware of when to administer medication. Management agreed to review this.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun in their learning and accessed a variety of toys and materials to support their progression. This included stories, art and crafts, water play, clay, and construction. Parents commented positively on play experiences and told us "my child is always involved in lots of opportunities of play. [They] enjoy cooking and doing woodwork" and "lots of sensory play like, water play, sand, mud. There are always new play experiences available for my child".

Children spent considerable amounts of time at areas within the nursery, leading their own learning. For example, in the art area, children were being creative with different materials and textures, whilst including us in their play. They told us "I am making art" and "I am making a rocket; I need something pointy". Staff were responsive to children's ideas and creations, providing supports when needed. For example, when they needed more materials. Parents told us "my child is able to freely choose to take part in a variety of activities daily, both indoors and outdoors" and "my child loves outdoor play and is encouraged to do so. [They] also love drawing and constructing and as well as listening to stories."

Planning systems were in place to help ensure children experienced high quality opportunities. These were mainly recorded within floorbooks and highlighted a child-led approach. This meant children had opportunities to look at photographs, reflecting on previous learning. Leaders identified where improvements were needed to ensure that planning approaches were fully responsive and were in the process of reviewing the recording format of these.

Children's literacy and numeracy development was supported through a variety of approaches. This included songs, stories, water play and, sorting and matching. Children enjoyed these experiences and told us 'look, I am making patterns' when exploring a variety of toys and materials.

Children's schematic play was supported by staff throughout the nursery. We observed children transporting items from one space to another, throwing bean bags into targets and connecting items together, such as sticking together junk modelling or putting train tracks together. They told us "I need more cellotape" when making their creations and "come and see this, look, we built a huge train track. This is for all the people to get into Glasgow. My daddy works in Glasgow". Schematic play, or schemas, is when children repeat the same actions or ideas during their play. This helps them to learn about the world around them.

All children had daily access to outdoors, helping to support their wellbeing. Children enjoyed exploring water, parachutes in the wind, mud kitchen and sand. Children engaged in role play, helping to support their imagination. Parents commented "my child loves being outside and doesn't care if it's wet or not. [They] love the activities outside and the mud kitchen and toys" and "my [child] is outside at any given opportunity and this is encouraged. [They] have also been involved in sports days, sunflower walks for charity and days out with the nursery."

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

Children experienced an environment that was bright, welcoming and nurturing. All staff had worked hard to redevelop spaces to promote a homely feel, and this contributed to a calming, peaceful and positive atmosphere, helping children to feel safe. Parents described the setting as a "nurturing learning environment. The nursery has such a homely feel and is so welcoming for myself and my child" and as having "lots of opportunities for very good purposeful play."

Spaces for children to hang their personal items, coats and jackets, helped promote a sense of belonging and supported children to feel they mattered. The location of the cloakroom being in the playroom meant that children could access their belongings as and when they needed to, helping to support emotional security and attachments. For example, if children needed to access their comforters.

Children were able to choose where to play, helping to support their choices and wishes. For example, different areas of nursery and, indoors and outdoors. Spaces were developed to enable children to lead their own learning. For example, in the construction area, children were using the trains and building blocks to reflect their own thoughts and ideas, helping to develop problem solving skills and supporting their imagination. Some spaces should be further enhanced to support new concepts that had been introduced following staff training. Staff agreed further developing this would enhance and support these new ideas. This would include adding more natural materials to spaces to support creativity and ensure children could access these on a daily basis.

A number of safety measures were in place to help protect children from harm. For example, secure entrances, regular head counts, good supervision and risk assessments of spaces. Staff were aware of the Care Inspectorates 'Keeping children safe campaign' called SIMOA and were supporting children's awareness and understanding of this. For example, supporting children to be involved in risk assessments of outdoor spaces. They shared their plans to further embed this within the setting. Information on 'Keeping Children Safe' can be found on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

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

Leaders were welcoming during the inspection and were receptive to feedback and eager to make improvements to support good outcomes for children. Leaders and staff had a shared vision of their improvement journey. Processes had been developed to review the vision, values and aims to help ensure these fostered an early years approach. Leaders highlighted their plans of ensuring all stakeholders were involved in this, including children and families.

A number of changes in the leadership team had taken place over a period of time. This meant there had been some uncertainty amongst the staff team, causing some low morale. However, permanent leaders had been appointed and were committed to providing stable, high-quality care for children, providing staff with assurances and stability. All leaders had worked hard to build relationships and support staff in their role. This meant staff felt more supported and settled at their work. They commented positively on all members of management and told us they had a "supportive team leader", "the head teacher is always available to discuss any concerns and is supportive and understanding" and their "team leader has always been very supportive of my needs."

An improvement plan in place highlighted the key areas of improvement needed within the service. This plan reflected an early year's approach, as well as highlighting how staff training had influenced these priorities. For example, following staff training, there was recognition of improvements to planning systems needed. These improvements were reflected findings at this inspection and the setting agreed with these. Management and staff were aware of where they were on their improvement journey and were committed to get it right for every child.

Parents were consulted with on improvements within the service, helping to ensure they felt included within their child's nursery. Parents told us "children are given the opportunity to vote when it comes to purchasing new items for the nursery. We are regularly asked for feedback and are welcome to speak to

staff members at any time to discuss any concerns or feedback we have" and "our opinion and suggestions are actively asked for and suggestion books are available at drop off or collection."

Quality assurance systems were in place to help support the delivery of service. For example, records of staff meetings, audits and self-evaluation. This offered opportunities for staff to come together, share reflections on practice as well as best practice guidance and discussing any changes needed. The service reflected on national frameworks such as How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC) and the Care Inspectorates 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' to support their thinking and professional dialogue.

Leaders and staff worked hard to review and embed children's rights throughout the nursery. This included reviewing the articles as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This meant that staff ensured children experienced practice that helped support them to feel informed, heard, valued and loved. This included, using stories to support children's understanding of their rights, asking for their opinions and ideas, reviewing daily routines to help ensure these were supportive of their needs and by ensuring interactions were filled with warmth, patience and kindness.

Staff accessed training which linked to mandatory training and champion roles. This included annual child protection, promoting positive relationships and understanding distressed behaviour. Recent training also included Froebel training, as well as exploring numeracy development, linking to how the environment and interactions can support children's learning and development. The service had developed a system for recording staff training and we suggested this could be further enhanced by adding staffs reflections on training and how these impacts on practice. For example, developing a staff training floorbook.

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 interacted with children in a positive, nurturing and caring manner. They were mindful to be at children's level, helping to support communication. Parents commented positively on the staff team and told us "the compassion and warmth the staff have and the love for looking after the children they go the extra mile everyday" and "warm, friendly staff and nurturing learning environment. The nursery has such a homely feel and is so welcoming for myself and my child. Staff really care about each child and provide a high level of care. I have no concerns when I leave my child as I know they will be well looked after."

Staff communicated well together, helping to share if a task took them away. In addition, staff were confident to offer support to each other and ask for support, if needed. This helped ensure children's needs were being met. For example, to support play experiences outdoors. Regular staff meetings provided opportunities for staff to come together and engage in professional dialogue. This meant there was opportunities to discuss children's needs, training and self-evaluation.

Staff were deployed in a way that supported good supervision of children to ensure their safety. However, this also meant staff were available to provide support for children's care, play and learning. For example, reading stories when requested, being involved in numeracy experiences, sitting at the snack table engaging in conversations and facilitating outdoor learning. This meant children experienced high quality care that met their needs.

Staff breaks were organised in a way that meant there was minimal impact on children's experiences. For example, all staff were present over lunchtime, which helped ensure this was a calm and unhurried experience for children. This meant staffs wellbeing was supported and they were refreshed and recharged to care for children.

Careful considerations had been given to daily routines, helping to ensure these reflected children's needs, interests and play experiences. This meant children had lots of uninterrupted play, helping to support fun and deeper learning. For example, at mealtimes, children were not asked to tidy up their toys and materials, which meant they could revisit their learning once they finished their meal.

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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