

Wester Overton Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 April 2024

Service provided by:
South Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003481

Service no:
CS2003015378

About the service

Wester Overton Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide care to 64 children aged three years to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time.

Care is provided from the nursery located in Wester Overton Primary School, Strathaven, South Lanarkshire. The service is close to local shops, schools, transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 and 17 April 2024 between 08:30 and 15:40. 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 six people using the service and 11 families
- Spoke with eight staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Spoke with one visiting professional.

Key messages

- Improvements had been made to ensure children's progress, reviews with parents and next steps to support significant needs and interests were logged in personal plans.
- The staff team were settled. They were working together and had created a warm and nurturing environment for children. They were communicating in a meaningful way which supported a focus on improving outcomes for children.
- Reflections and changes to the environment had increased child engagement, choice and movement in play.
- Quality assurance processes had been introduced. This was helping to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Staff had accessed training that provided them with a greater understanding of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning. This helped improve confidence and knowledge of good practice guidance.

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?	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?

4 - Good

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Staff were respectful of children's rights. They were warm, caring and nurturing. Sensitive approaches helped children feel that their views mattered and gave them a sense of ownership of their day and experiences. Parents felt part of this and told us they felt welcomed into the service. A parent said "I have attended stay and play sessions, Bookbug and library visits, the staff really appreciated my time. We have an open evening coming up and regular check ins".

Staff were working with families to involve them in decisions about their child's care such as parent consultations throughout the year and regular reviews of children's personal plans. Parents told us "I have seen both of my children's care plans often. I feel like the goals set by the practitioners and myself are great as well as a personal contribution towards the development and needs of both my children. They have overcome obstacles thanks to the dedication and commitment from all the staff involved". We agreed that parental participation was supporting a consistent approach to improving children's outcomes.

All children had a personal plan in place. These plans took account of GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) wellbeing principles and contained information such as likes, care needs and routines. Plans ensured significant needs and interests were individual to all children.

The service told us of some challenges faced in the past year and how they worked to increase their knowledge, confidence and improve systems to support children. This included staff training sessions about nurture, play pedagogy and mental health. A parent expressed their satisfaction with support for their child telling us "I have attended regular goal setting meetings with my child's key worker. I have also attended parents' nights where we have discussed how my child is enjoying nursery in general".

Additional support plans were in place for individual children when needed. These were helping children to achieve. Strategies were applied and staff told us when changes had to be made they worked to adapt and tailor these to individuals. Specialist support services were involved in developing plans, monitoring progress and creating suitable next steps such as speech and language therapy. A parent told us "I have a kinship arrangement and the nursery have been very supportive. They always have time to listen if I have any worries".

Personal care needs such as supporting toileting were carried out in a sensitive manner. Staff were aware of individual needs and responded accordingly. Children were secure and confident in having staff support them. This supported children's dignity and privacy.

Overall, the management and monitoring of medication, accidents and incidents was implemented in line with good practice guidance. For example, medication was stored safely out of the reach of children and audits of relevant documentation were taking place monthly. This was supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Ongoing monitoring to secure the best lunchtime experience for children was underway. However, definite improvements had been made since the last inspection. Mealtimes were calm, sociable and unhurried. Children had opportunities to pour their own drinks, self-serve and were responding positively to the experience. Staff sat with children and used this time to connect. Children enjoyed their meals and had access to water throughout the day to keep hydrated. This was supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They participated in regular training and systems ensured they were confident in recognising and responding appropriately to any concerns.

1.3 Play and learning

The manager told us there had been a focus on increased training to support quality play and learning. This had been identified as part of the service improvement plan and we were able to see elements of this in practice. For example, there was a big interest in loose parts play both indoors and outdoors. Staff had consulted with children and moved as well as increased the size of the area. This proved to be more engaging and provided children with challenge, opportunities to solve problems and work as a team as they created structures. This helped extend children's thinking and consolidated learning.

Children were singing, laughing and having fun during their play. There were minimal interruptions to play and children benefitted from transporting resources around areas to help bring depth to their learning. This supported children's interests and creativity in play.

There was a developing balance of spontaneous and planned play experiences that were promoting choice and independence. Experiences on offer took children's interests and curiosities in different directions with staff extending and engaging in their experiences. For example, a wide variety of instruments captured children's interest such as a violin and vinyl record player. Children selected smooth jazz music and this played in the background. A staff member extended this interest by asking questions and then offered recycled cardboard materials as a provocations to make their own musical instruments.

The service had identified literacy as an area of focus within the improvement plan. Strategies such as home link story bags, good practice prompts and training were used to support development. This was helping to develop children's skills.

Staff had worked closely with a speech and language therapist to support progression of children's language and to develop a communication friendly environment. This was supporting staff in meeting children's significant needs and helped to inform planning approaches.

There was a wide variety of resources and areas for children to explore and experience learning both indoors and outdoors. Staff had reflected and worked to support risky play experiences. They told us this had been a learning journey. It was observed during inspection that staff had embraced this approach. Children benefitted from the challenging and risky experiences in which they had to think, problem solve and make decisions.

We noted that the environment had been further developed to build more challenge and creativity into children's experiences. The team continued to reflect on this regularly during discussions and meetings.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The playroom was welcoming and homely. An audit of the environment had taken place which considered children's likes, interests and layout. As a result, changes had been made. For example, the block play area had been moved to provide a larger space with more storage. The service was bright, spacious and a pleasant environment for children to play, learn and relax.

Safety measures were contributing to keeping children safe. For example, a secure buzzer and fob entry system, risk assessments and clear communication between staff.

A variety of loose parts and open-ended materials were available to children. This supported learning across curricular areas. One parent told us "My child has been involved in lots of outdoor play and lots of indoor too. The nursery provides a wide variety of play for the children" and another said, "My child loves trips out of nursery as well as experimenting in nursery making lots of fun things".

Equipment and furniture were well maintained. Resources were varied and in a good state of repair. Maintenance logs were up to date and areas identified were actioned and recorded. We identified a few maintenance issues that were repaired before the inspection concluded such as a gate bolt and faulty water tap in the children's toilet.

A wide variety of policies were available for families. These were supporting the management of the service. Policies in place covered areas such as child protection, accidents and complaints.

Infection control procedures were contributing to keeping children safe such as clean and well stocked children's toilets and embedded handwashing. This was helping to ensure children's health and wellbeing was maintained.

Children and families had a sense of belonging and connection at the service. The team focused on delivering a nurturing and family led approach. This was supported by the service vision and values which included helping children to build respect, responsibility and resilience.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

A range of communication methods were in place to share information and gather views of families and children such as parent consultations, online platforms and an online app sharing photos and observations of children. However, the manager told us they had plans to further develop communications.

Some parents told us they appreciated this saying "I am always informed of what's going on" and another said "I feel the nursery has been revitalised. They have been testing out new processes".

Staff felt valued and motivated to provide quality care for children and families. Ongoing discussions and reflections as a team had provided an opportunity to realign expectations for all relating to communication and engagement. We agreed that ongoing leadership support and clear communication would further enhance staff confidence within their role.

Since the last inspection, processes such as audits and playroom observations had been introduced. These had contributed to improvements for children and their families. The manager should continue to embed these approaches within quality assurance and monitoring to ensure they are robust and lead to embedded improvement.

A parent told us they felt "The staff are great and so caring with the children but the communication around the staffing could be a lot better" while another said "Staff are great, good communication with parents".

Team meetings were taking place and used as an opportunity to share information about developments at the service. They had been developed to include regular opportunities for the staff team to share practice and embed the vision for improvement.

Staff professional review meetings were underway and were reflective of the achievements and challenges faced in the past year. Staff told us they found these supportive and helped them with professional reflections. The service should continue to support staff in this way this to ensure there is a consistent focus on providing constructive feedback.

The manager had started networking with other support services. This had provided meaningful opportunities to offer training and strategies about how best to meet the needs of all children. This was beginning to have a positive impact on staff approaches and outcomes for children.

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.

4.3 Staff deployment

Deployment of staff supported supervision of children. Staff were consistent in their communication during daily tasks and responsibilities. Due to staff absences during inspection, there were periods of time that cover staff were used from the primary school and other establishments. Following a discussion, we were satisfied that the manager had been reflecting on absences and had strategies in place this to minimise impact on children's experiences across the day.

The leadership team and staff told us the service had faced challenging circumstances in the last year. However, parents told us the team had "Always seems well prepared" and another said, "There is always someone there to greet us, to talk to about my child if I need to and to start playing with the children. The phone is always answered if I need to talk to staff during the day". Staff were happy, motivated and committed to their role. Their common vision was helping them to achieve quality care and learning for children.

Consideration had been given to the skills, knowledge and expertise of the staff team as part of the improvement plans for the service. Continuing to support and offer development opportunities for staff would further enhance positive experiences across the day for children.

The induction process had been reviewed to ensure it would help new staff to build relationships with children and families, understand their responsibility to keep children safe, and continually develop their learning. We signposted the service to good practice guidance the National Induction Resource to further support staff inductions moving forward.

All staff caring for children were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. They are the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. They provide public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice and support the professional development of those registered with them.

Parents were confident that staff were working well as a team to support children and to improve outcomes for them. They told us "Happy with the care my child has received", "The staff are lovely and always go above and beyond with anything my child or I need" and "It's personable and genuine".

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

The manager should ensure that children's progress, reviews with parents and next steps set to support significant needs and interests are logged in personal plans.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I am fully involved in developing and reviewing my personal plan, which is always available to me. (HSCS 2.17)

This area for improvement was made on 9 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Improvements had been made to ensure that children's progress, reviews with parents and next steps to support significant needs and interests were logged in personal plans. This area for improvement was addressed.

Previous area for improvement 2

To improve the quality of children's experiences, the manager should develop quality assurance processes that are robust and identify strengths and areas for development.

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 9 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The manager and leadership team had developed quality assurance processes that were robust. This was helping to identify strengths and areas for development. This area for improvement was addressed.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure that children receive high quality care, the manager should ensure that staff access training that provides them with a greater understanding of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning and improved knowledge of good practice guidance to able to reflect on practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 9 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The manager had secured a variety of staff training that provided staff with a greater understanding of integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning. This had refreshed and improved staff knowledge of good practice guidance. This area for improvement was addressed.

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	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
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

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