

Castleview School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

Raploch Community Campus
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Stirling Council

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About the service

Castleview School Nursery Class provides early learning and childcare for children with severe and complex additional support needs across Stirling Council. Children are cared for within Castleview School alongside primary school aged children. The school is located on the Raploch Community Campus which includes two primary schools, a nursery, an ASN Outreach service as well as community sports facilities. It is close to local transport links and amenities such as parks, shops and the city centre.

Children are cared for in a classroom adapted to meet children's individual needs, including hoists and specialist mobility equipment and this is close to personal care facilities. Children also have access to a wide range of play spaces in the school such as a hydro pool, sensory rooms and an open plan area for children to be together as a school community. The school also has access to a minibus for outings. Relevant risk assessments, insurances and maintenance checks are in place to keep children safe on this transport.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 4 October 2022 between 09:45 and 17:45. 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:

- spent time with two children using the service and spoke with one of their family members
- spoke with four staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children were happy and content in their play which was tailored to meet their needs, rights and choices.
- Families felt included and respected in making decisions about their child's care, play and learning.
- Staff were warm, caring, kind and compassionate using a very good range of communication methods to include children in their play.
- Relevant professionals worked collaboratively to meet children's needs and support children to reach their potential.
- The facilities offered children a very good range of play experiences that helped them to explore their own curiosities and capabilities, while also offering therapeutic care.
- Leaders had a very good understanding of what worked well and what could be better, using relevant best practice to meet national expectations.
- Staffing levels need to be more flexible so that time for more private discussions and team development are protected and valuable.
- Medication procedures could be improved to reduce duplication and save time.

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?	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?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care, play and learning provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced tailored routines that met their individual needs very well. There was a very good balance between offering children fun play experiences while also meeting their therapeutic needs. Staff were able to respond quickly and appropriately to children's actions and emotions while understanding their needs, rights and choices. Very good examples of effective communication included using augmented alternative communication aids, so children and families could share their news and thoughts between home and school every day. This support meant children could hear familiar voices from home, creating a nurturing and secure space for them. It also helped families to feel included in their child's play and learning.

Very good collaborative working between children, staff, families and other professionals promoted positive outcomes for children. Everyone worked together to focus on children's individual needs, rights and choices when planning their care, play and learning experiences. A range of professionals were regularly included in children's daily routines, supporting them to reach their full potential. Families told us they felt fully included and respected in making decisions about their child's personal plan which was very detailed and supported everyone to understand what was best for children. The plans offered a full picture of each child as an individual with unique personalities, strengths and talents. We discussed how parts of the personal plan, such as medication procedures, could reduce duplication and give children more quality time with staff.

Children's mealtimes were unhurried and relaxed while also meeting children's specialised routines so they remained safe and healthy. Children were encouraged to gather around the table as a group, making this a social experience. They also experienced one-to-one support from staff throughout. Staff smiled and encouraged children throughout mealtimes, creating a pleasant and fun atmosphere. There were a few times when these valued staff interactions were interrupted, which impacted on the quality of experience. This is discussed in more detail under key question four.

1.3 Play and learning

Children experienced a very good range of fun and exciting play. They were encouraged to explore their own capabilities and achieve their potential in a way which made them happy and built their confidence. These play experiences were carefully matched to children's stage of development and took into full consideration what they needed and wanted from their play. The team used relevant best practice to plan play that recognised children's interests and strengths. For example, each child had a small pocket on the back of their chairs personalised to them with interesting objects that they loved and enjoyed. These personal touches showed that the team respected and valued children's views.

Music and singing activities were particularly popular with children who smiled, laughed and played along with staff to explore rhythm and develop a love of music. Children also used their imagination and felt a sense of freedom when exploring the sensory play experiences on offer. The team fully understood children's right to play and offered a balance between planned and spontaneous experiences as much as possible.

As a result, children were supported to feel empowered and included in their own play with the skilled support of those who cared for them. We asked the service to use best practice guidance specifically for younger children when making further changes to play and learning. This will enhance the very good experiences children are being offered and challenge them even further to reach their potential.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths do not require significant adjustment and children are offered high-quality experiences.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The purpose-built premises offered children a fun and welcoming environment to play and learn. The spaces were carefully planned to ensure that children could move as freely as possible with minimal barriers to achieving their potential. Specialised equipment and tailored resources were available to meet children's needs in line with their personal plan. Children's interests, curiosities and ideas were valued and respected when planning what they played with each day. The resources available to children kept them excited and interested while offering them independence to play in their own way. The team were looking at research and best practice to consider ways to make the setting more homely and comfortable. This would create an even more welcoming and nurturing space for everyone.

There was ample space in the school to ensure children were offered very good developmentally appropriate experiences. The sensitive structure of the environment meant children were supported to have a positive sense of wellbeing in an unhurried and nurturing way. Outdoor spaces were also well equipped to offer them inclusive play experiences, including providing children appropriate clothing so they were comfortable in all weathers. Children had a few opportunities to spend time in the local community and we encouraged the team to do this more often, as they had done in previous years. For example, allowing children to explore green, natural environments would offer them fun and exciting sensory play that fulfils their curiosities and imagination.

The setting was clean, safe and secure. Furniture, equipment and spaces were very well maintained and the headteacher told us that any issues were fixed quickly so that children received continuity and consistency in their care. Staff understood how to keep the space safe for children and used their very good training and development to reduce risk and remove potential hazards quickly. Children's health needs were prioritised by the team who kept the school clean and tidy so the risk of the spread of infection was minimised as much as possible. As a result, children remained safe and healthy.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question, where there was a culture of continuous improvement that promoted positive outcomes for children.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children's individual needs, rights and choices were at the heart of any decisions that were made to improve the service. The team were focussed on ensuring each child was happy, confident and achieving in a way that fulfilled their potential. Each professional included in the service was committed and dedicated to offering children a high-quality experience that supported positive outcomes.

Leaders promoted and sustained this vision for children and changes were made together as a team with some shared responsibility for their success.

Following the pandemic, the headteacher was beginning to encourage families to be more involved in the development of the setting. Families told us that they were very pleased with the level of communication they received and valued the regular photos, comments and involvement in meetings about their child's experiences. They knew that their views were used to offer children the right support, at the right time, in line with their vision and values.

There was a culture of continuous improvement, supported by clear self-evaluation and improvement plans that focussed on promoting positive outcomes for children. Regular observations of children's play were completed so that some staff received constructive feedback on their work. Most relevant quality frameworks were being used to help the team understand best practice and national expectations. There was some room for improvement in linking this to research specifically for younger children and the team had begun to consider this in their work. There were specific plans in place to achieve this so that this valuable learning could be embedded into children's experiences as soon as possible.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on children's wellbeing. A few improvements are required to maximise wellbeing and ensure children consistently experience high-quality care.

4.3 Staff deployment

Children were cared for by a passionate and dedicated staff team who want the best for children. They worked flexibly to keep children safe and offer children a fun and positive experience most of the time. High levels of staffing when children were in the setting, meant that they mostly received one-to-one care with a trusted adult, ensuring there were strong relationships between children, staff and families. Other professionals who were often in the setting added an extra level of expertise to give children therapeutic care that promoted positive holistic wellbeing. The team had a limited number of opportunities throughout the year to meet as a team and discuss what children needed. Careful planning had been completed by leaders in organising this important and valued time together as a group. More of these kinds of sessions would promote a better learning culture in the team and offer children a higher quality experience more consistently.

While staff were committed to improving outcomes for children and offered warm, nurturing and compassionate care, there were times when staff discussed some of children's more intimate needs in front of them. Staffing levels were not flexible enough to offer them sufficient time away from children's care so they could have important discussions with professionals. While children were kept safe, talking about some aspects of children's care while offering them one-to-one support reduced the quality time children valued with adults. For example, arrival and departure times for key staff meant that potentially important discussions about the routine of the day ahead could only be held when children were in the setting. With some of the details of children's care requiring intimate discussions, having a lack of flexibility meant children's privacy and dignity could be compromised. We asked leaders to consider how deployment and levels of staff could be more effective in ensuring high-quality outcomes for children.

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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