

St. Andrews Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

St. Andrews Primary
Toab
Orkney
KW17 2QU

Telephone: 01856 861 256

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 April 2023

Service provided by:
Orkney Islands Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001951

Service no:
CS2003016061

About the service

St. Andrews Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 64 children aged from two years to not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than 10 are aged two years to under three years.

The service is accommodated in a purpose-built nursery within St. Andrews Primary School, Toab, Orkney. Children have access to a large playroom with two smaller linked play areas. There is an integrated kitchen and toilets. The outdoor play area is under construction, however children have access to a smaller outdoor play area in the interim.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 April 2023 between 09:15 and 17:30. 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
- spoke with nine of their parents/carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were supported with kindness, care, and nurturing approaches that supported their overall wellbeing.
- Children were offered appetising and nutritious lunches and snacks. They experienced positive mealtimes which promoted their independence and self help skills.
- Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning.
- The indoor learning environment was attractive and structured to support children's age and stage of development.
- The outdoor environment was under construction, however children were able to play outside in a designated safe play area.
- The service was well led and quality assurance, including self evaluation and improvement plans, were in place to support continuous improvement of the service.

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/people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were supported with kindness, care, and nurturing approaches that supported their overall wellbeing. Children were happy and had developed positive attachments to staff. This contributed to a very positive ethos where children laughed, giggled, and had fun. Staff were responsive to children's physical and emotional needs, helping to promote positive self esteem, confidence, and their independence. A parent commented: "Staff are so caring, compassionate, and understanding and really go the extra mile for children".

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Parents provided key information about their child's personality and interests and staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children. Support plans with clear strategies to support their progress made meant children with additional support needs were well supported to achieve their full potential. All personal plans were updated every six months. However, a few children had made significant progress which had not been recorded. We discussed ensuring plans are updated as children develop and the manager agreed to action this.

Children were provided with appetising and nutritious meals and snacks. Mealtimes were well organised, unhurried, and supportive of their needs. Children were encouraged to be independent and children benefitted from opportunities to self serve. A few children who did not like the food offered were provided with soup as an alternative. Water was readily available during the day to help keep children hydrated and well.

Children's safety, emotional security, and wellbeing were supported through arrangements for rest and relaxation. Consideration had been given to the furnishings, fittings, and play zones to help reduce the noise levels in the playroom. This contributed to a busy but calm atmosphere. Children were able to choose to play quietly on their own and a few children enjoyed reading books, cuddled up on the sofa. This meant children were well rested and happy.

Children were kept safe and protected from harm and abuse by knowledgeable and well trained staff. Chronologies were used effectively to record significant events in a child's life that may impact on their health and wellbeing and other agencies had been contacted, when necessary. Staff utilised a nurture board to ensure children and their families were provided with the support and help they needed. This led to high-quality care and good outcomes for children.

1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their play through a balance of spontaneous and planned high-quality experiences. Small group activities worked well to engage children, develop their ideas, and consolidate their learning. One parent commented: "My child hugely enjoys nursery, learns a lot, and has fun each day".

Cheerful and enthusiastic staff were skilled in using quality interactions to engage and involve children in

play activities. They were very good at recognising when children needed help and in encouraging them to investigate and practise new skills. They used praise well to develop children's confidence and self esteem. Some staff used effective use of questioning to extend children's thinking, widen their skills, and consolidate their learning. This contributed to interested and excited children, high-quality play, and learning experiences.

Children were well supported to achieve and progress. Planning approaches were child-centred, involved all staff, and were responsive to children's interests. Peedie notes and learning stories were effective in recording observations of the children at play and used to identify and develop next steps to support learning and progression. Key group activities were successful in meeting the individual needs of the children. As a result, children were progressing well and were happy and confident.

Literacy and numeracy development was embedded in the play experiences. There were opportunities for early mark making and early reading skills were promoted through the recognition of environment print and books. Children enjoyed reading stories and singing rhymes with staff in the comfortable and attractive reading areas. Staff introduced number recognition and encouraged children to count when playing and through everyday experiences, such as mealtimes. This contributed to interested and engaged children.

Children benefited from opportunities to play outside despite the inclement weather. This supported their emotional health and wellbeing as they were able to play games, run around, and explore in the fresh air.

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/people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Children were able to play in a beautiful and recently constructed nursery. They were still in the early days of moving in and some areas, such as the foyer for parents, were still in the process of being developed. The playrooms looked very welcoming and the facilities, furnishings, and equipment were of very good quality. The layout of the nursery worked very well to support children's choice, independent access across all play areas, and free-flow between inside and out. This meant children had fun choosing what and where they wanted to play, helping them to grow into confident and resilient learners.

The playrooms were attractive, well resourced, and supported children's age and stage of development. Children benefitted from child height workstations which created perfect play experiences for children. They had fun painting and modelling with clay in the messy areas. Saws, hammers, and other tools were used safely at the workbench, helping children problem solve and be imaginative. The roleplay areas were well resourced with plates, cups, and other familiar items found in real life which helped sustain their play and extend their ideas. A wide range of natural materials were easily accessible and enjoyed by the children. However, as moving into the nursery was still ongoing, soft lighting to create a calming ambiance and peaceful atmosphere was still in development. The manager shared plans for moving forward, considering the views and suggestions of children, staff, and parents.

Children benefitted from opportunities to play outside. A large outdoor play area was still under development with plans for a dry river, sandpit with boulders, and a slide. In the interim, children had fun playing in a smaller outdoor space accessed from the main playroom. This provided opportunities for sand and water play and reflected children's current interests and curiosities. Parents strongly agreed their children had regular opportunities for outdoor play.

Risk assessments were in place for the new building to help identify any possible hazards and help keep children safe and well. Children were encouraged to understand the impact and consequence of risky and unsafe behaviour and to make informed decisions about the risk taken during their play. In doing so, children's activities were not compromised and they were supported to enjoy challenging and fun play experiences.

Children's health was promoted by staff's understanding of infection prevention and control. The setting was clean and tidy and we observed good handwashing before and eating.

Children's privacy was protected by the safe storage of their information, including electronic and paper files.

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/people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Children, families, and staff were involved in developing a shared vision for the service which reflected their aspirations. This helped everyone know what to expect and created conditions for well informed change.

The importance of using the views of parents and children to inform the planning and development of the service was part of their improvement plan. The previous building limited opportunities for parents entering the nursery and ways to encourage this in the new premises were ongoing. This included planned play and stay sessions and encouraging children to invite their parents in. Emails and information shared through electronic diaries helped keep parents informed of any changes to the setting. All parents responded they either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service.

Strong leadership within the service promoted a culture of continuous improvement. The managers of the service worked very collaboratively to initiate change by involving and recognising the contributions of staff. Self evaluation was embedded in practice and had led to positive outcomes for children. Staff, children, and parents were consulted about the move to the new nursery which made the transition easier and ensured high-quality care remained at the heart of the service provision. Leadership, at all levels, was evident in the evolving play spaces developed by staff, considering the interests and the needs of children. Staff were kept well informed of new initiatives and asked for suggestions during team meetings. These were used to inform the service improvement plan which focussed on moving into the new building and in involving parents and families.

Children benefited from effective quality assurance systems that impacted positively on their experiences and outcomes. Regular audits of medication and of any accidents which took place in the service helped keep children safe and well. Regular observations of staff practice, including information recorded in children's learning journals, helped deliver good outcomes for children and families.

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/people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Motivated and enthusiastic staff supported children. Staff told us they felt very well supported and valued for their commitment and hard work. They were encouraged to make changes and develop the play areas and benefitted from the responsibility. This contributed to a positive ethos where staff felt happy, appreciated, and motivated to initiate change.

A mix of staff skills and experience helped ensure the children's experience across the day was positive. Parents told us the staff are mainly consistent. The managers said planned absences were well managed and they have been well supported by relief staff, such as to cover maternity leave. This supported high-quality outcomes for children.

Children were supported by staff who worked well together. The day-to-day routines were well organised and managed to ensure good outcome for children. Staff were flexible and were very aware of where they needed to be to support the children. The zoning of play areas with a staff member available to support children worked very well to engage, sustain interest, and keep children safe.

Skilled and knowledgeable staff supported children's care, wellbeing, and learning. Staff were enthusiastic to undertake training, such as British Sign Language (BSL) and promoting positive behaviour. This was evident in their very good practice when supporting children's learning and development. This led to positive interactions and very good outcomes for children. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of safeguarding children and in infection prevention and control procedures to help keep children safe and well.

Staff deployment worked well to support the needs of the children. Good communication between staff ensured children were still provided with the support they needed when staff were engaged in other activities. There were good handovers between staff members to ensure continuity of experience and ensure children's health, wellbeing, and safety. Parents agreed there were enough staff to meet children's needs and one parent commented: "The team is excellent".

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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