

Meethill School Nursery Day Care of Children

Meethill School
School Road
Peterhead
AB42 2BF

Telephone: 01779 474920

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 20 March 2017

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Care service number:
CS2003015721

About the service

Meethill School Nursery has been registered since 2002. It is registered to provide a day care of children service for 40 children aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school where no more than 10 children are aged 2 years.

The service is provided by Aberdeenshire Council and operates within Meethill Primary School in the coastal town of Peterhead, Aberdeenshire. The accommodation consists of a large open plan classroom for the two classes, together with quiet room spaces and relevant facilities.

The overarching aim of the service was to ensure all children are happy, safe, healthy, active, cared for, achieving, respected, responsible and included. This was in line with the health and wellbeing indicators of Getting it Right for Every Child; a Scottish Government initiative. In addition the nursery aims for children to achieve the four capacities set out in a Curriculum for Excellence; successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The Care Inspectorate checks services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC); Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it right for every child: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible; and included.

What people told us

There were up to 37 children present at the time of the inspection aged from two years up to five years. We observed the children and saw that they were happy and confident in the setting. We talked to children about their experiences and they told us:

- "We are making an aeroplane, but it's nae finished yet. These are the steps to get on it and this is the driving seat".
- "We are making a Batman aeroplane".
- "I am drawing shopping".
- "We have pencils and scissors that we can get ourselves".
- "It's a dinosaur castle, its made of ice and it can shoot snowballs and fly with wings".
- "I am going to my mummy's nursery this afternoon to see beasties; there will be snakes".

Sixteen out of 25 parents returned completed questionnaires to us before the inspection. All were very happy with the service. Written comments included:

- "The teaching staff are brilliant and always keep me informed about my child's progress. They regularly go out to the local beach, forest and allotments and during the summer months they are outside playing in the playground every day. My child is always keen to get to nursery and loves the staff and his friends".
- "The staff are brilliant and I feel happy and at ease to leave my child with them".

- "I would like to say big thanks to all the teachers in Meethill School Nursery. They do hard work to help my child develop her skills and feeling confident and comfortable. I enjoy spending time together during nursery trips to the forest and beach and also stay and play sessions. I can see how my little one grows up".
- "My child loves going to Meethill Nursery. She loves that they go outside to play and go to different places. They went to church at Christmas; its great that the nursery let the children experience different things".
- "Meethill nursery has a very nice atmosphere. The staff are very kind and caring. My child loves going there".
- "The staff are very willing to help if any issues arise. They are always informative of things going on. I am very happy with my child's progress since starting nursery".
- "The nursery is such a lovely environment for the kids; stimulating and fun. The teachers in particular have been remarkable at bringing my child on; confidence wise and educationally".
- "All the staff are friendly and I can easily talk to them if we had any concerns. My child loves going to nursery and has settled in very well".
- "Brilliant nursery with excellent facilities. The staff always keep parents well informed on their child's learning milestones and development".
- "The nursery as a whole is brilliant. They always ask us parents to get involved with activity days. I cannot fault the nursery team. A bigger building would be nice, but it's a nice space for little kids".

One parent said her child was bored at school nursery and thought it unfair to have to pay a full week snack money when her child only attended part-time. We looked into these issues as part of the inspection. The head teacher advised that the latter issue had been resolved by a change to local authority policy.

As part of this inspection we also looked at concerns raised with us in an anonymous complaint. Findings are reported on within the inspection report.

Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed and relevant self assessment from the service. The service identified what it thought they did well and areas where it planned to make continued improvement. The service told us how feedback from children and families influenced the development of the service. The assessment had not fully reflected on the impact of the service on outcomes for children and families.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

The quality of care and support provided for children at Meethill School Nursery was very good. Staff had established very positive relationships with parents. Partnership working with both parents and other agencies ensured that children's development and care needs were planned for and supported well. 'Widget' pictures were used to support communication and additional resources sought. Medication procedures were followed appropriately to keep children safe and well.

Children demonstrated sound attachments to staff who responded to children with kindness, warmth and bosies on request. Staff reflected with children on how they were feeling. As a result children; including the younger two's group, were secure, happy and confident. Following the short welcome time children had very good opportunities to choose their own activities throughout the session. All were very engaged in their chosen activity; playing imaginatively in small groups, building complex structures collaboratively or engaging in creative activities. They had access to outdoor play when they chose and made very good use of loose parts outdoors for imaginative play and physical balancing.

High quality interaction supported children's literacy development and thinking skills. Children were confident speakers and authors of their own individualised stories. Children were skilled in representing their ideas in drawing. Most were able to write their own name or recognise their own name stickers to label their work. Staff demonstrated excellent story telling skills and as a result all children listened well at the end of session story time. Children explored literacy and numeracy through their imaginative play; they wrote down customers orders and shopping lists when working in their café and shop. They explored numbers and the purpose of money with real coins.

Children were being helped to understand healthy eating approaches when involved in choosing snack menus which were balanced and varied. Children had been involved in a decision for snack in keyworker groups which were quite large. This meant the small room was crowded and noisy. A more free flow choice approach would make it a pleasanter social experience. Children were developing some responsibility, independence and self-help skills in snack routines, however, this could have been better in a smaller group.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The quality of environment provided for children at Meethill School Nursery was good. The playroom was a large open plan space that offered a wide variety of play opportunities to the two nursery classes. It was set out to create cosy play areas for small groups. Furniture and resources were of high quality. Children had participated in planning the activities with mark making and drawings. Activities were presented to encourage children's choice and independence.

The children benefitted from the addition of small quiet rooms adjoining the main play space which were used for a variety of purposes including snack which meant continuity of play within the main playroom. The children came together for very short all together times such as welcome or story time.

We looked at how the staff organised the drop off and pick up times. We found that pick up time could be congested. The furniture; arranged to slow children's pace, also hampered the parents' progress. Staff spoke to parents informally as they came and went, but watched the open door and ensured children were safe. We asked the management and staff to review the organisation of pick up and drop off times to make it safer for children and easier for parents. At the previous inspection we made a recommendation that the provider should refurbish the children's toilet areas. It was recognised that the location of coat pegs caused congestion and may compromise children's privacy and dignity in the toilets. Most parents put children's coats on in the main play area. The head teacher advised that the local authority were working on building plans to change the toilet and cloakroom areas. The recommendation is ongoing. **(See recommendation 1.)**

Children enjoyed regular trips to a local wooded area which extended the children's environment and experiences. Most parents appreciated the logistics of organising these outings and worked in partnership with staff; dropping off and collecting their children from location. All parents were welcome to help and join in on outings if they wished. Parents were informed of the nursery policy not to share photographs of children on social media. The nursery had gathered feedback on the forest trips which was overwhelmingly positive. Both parents and staff evaluations noted the positive impact on children becoming more confident, adventurous and physically skilled.

Staff were qualified in first aid and had recorded all accidents to children in detail including first aid administered and how children were comforted; these were signed by and a copy given to parents.

Children were protected from the spread of infection by staff following good practice in hygiene procedures and infection control. Children were observed to be very good at washing their hands independently at relevant times. We talked to staff about how toileting is managed on trips and they described appropriate approaches using portable, disposable equipment in the woods. They had chosen suitable venues for visits with children that were equipped with toilets and hand-washing facilities; for example the reindeer centre at Christmas.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The provider should refurbish the children's toilet areas to ensure that the flooring is safer, that the environment is pleasant and appealing to young children and protects children's privacy.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 2: A Safe Environment

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The quality of staffing, supporting children at Meethill School Nursery was very good. Parents and children had been consulted about what qualities they wanted to see in their 'super staff'. Our feedback from parents confirmed that parents were very satisfied with the quality of staffing; commenting on their kindness and care to the children; treating children as their own, creating a welcoming atmosphere, their friendliness and willingness to talk about the children and offer any help they can, and how much their children loved the staff.

We found that the new staff team were working very well together and co-ordinated their deployment across the play areas to give children the best possible experiences indoors and out. All were qualified as nursery practitioners. Lead practitioners were highly experienced; bringing a range of skills that supported both the staff team and children very well.

Staff had taken responsibility for ensuring that they were all up to date in aspects of core training such as child protection, first aid, infection control and elementary food hygiene. All demonstrated good practice and a sound understanding of their role contributing to keeping children safe and well. Staff had kept their early learning and childcare knowledge soundly up to date by reading, internet research and attending further training events. As a result children's care and learning experiences were positive and supporting their development.

Staff were hardworking, conscientious and reflective in their thinking. They evaluated their work and were constantly working to improve the nursery for the children and families. Their evaluations showed that they will continuously improve.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The quality of management and leadership at Meethill School Nursery was good.

A focus in the school improvement plan on parental involvement had been taken forward in nursery and impacted positively on the nursery, children and families. Newsletters were informative and gave parents plenty of advance notice of events. A weekly bulletin and displays of planning kept parents well informed about activities. The nursery welcomed all parents as helpers and contributors to extend the children's experiences. Stay and play sessions were offered on a regular basis and evaluated for their purpose. Parents' views and opinions were gathered in a variety of ways and taken due account of in planning events and experiences for the children. Parents participation in 'Friends of Meethill' fundraising and garden activities were appreciated by staff.

At the previous inspection we made a recommendation that the head teacher and staff should reinstate robust systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of the nursery. This had not been progressed with any rigour due to changes in temporary head teachers. The acting head had worked in partnership with staff to help them in their new role and to maintain the quality of children's experiences in the nursery. The head teacher had ensured that children's additional support needs were fully met. A new permanent depute head teacher had recently been recruited who had relevant nursery experience to support the nursery further. The recommendation is ongoing and is carried forward in this report. **(See recommendation 1).**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The head teacher and staff should reinstate robust systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of the nursery.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 13: Improving the Service

Grade: 4 - good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The provider should refurbish the children's toilet areas to ensure that the flooring is safer and that the environment is pleasant and appealing to young children.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 2: A Safe Environment

This recommendation was made on 12 March 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The local authority were developing plans to refurbish the children's toilets and cloakroom area to make them safe, pleasant and protect children's privacy. The recommendation was not yet met and was restated in this report.

Recommendation 2

The head teacher and staff should reinstate robust systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of the nursery.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 13: Improving the Service

This recommendation was made on 12 March 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Changes in temporary head teachers had hampered robust systems being implemented. The acting head teacher had maintained, but not yet improved the work of the nursery. The recommendation was not yet met and is restated in this report.

Complaints

Anonymous concerns were looked at during this inspection and reported on.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
12 Mar 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
16 Mar 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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