

Stornoway Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Stornoway Primary School
Jamieson Drive
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2LF

Telephone: 01851 822878

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 November 2024

Service provided by:
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Service provider number:
SP2003002104

Service no:
CS2003017064

About the service

Stornoway Primary School Nursery is provided by Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, and is registered to provide a daycare service to a maximum of 96 children at any one time, aged from two years and six months to an age to attend primary school. Sixty-two children attended the service when it was inspected.

The service is in the Stornoway Primary School campus, on the Isle of Lewis, in the Western Isles. It is located close to local shops, amenities, public transport, farms and green spaces. It has three playrooms and safe, easy access to outdoor play areas within the school grounds. One playroom offered full Gaelic emersion, and the two other playrooms supported Gaelic learners.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26, 27 and 28 November 2024. 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 children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed 18 completed questionnaires from staff and families
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were nurtured, engaged in quality experiences, and having fun.
- Staff had developed meaningful relationships with each other, children, and families.
- Children experienced care within a service where they were fully immersed in Gaelic medium.
- Children benefitted from well-furnished, and well-resourced facilities.
- Quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning were meaningful and having a positive impact on the outcomes for children and families.
- The staff team and management team engaged with the inspection positively and were keen to take forward any suggestions for improvement.
- The management team had carefully deployed staff across the service to ensure the service was led well, and all children's needs were being met well.
- Staff being reflective in their practice had led to very good outcomes for children.

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?	4 - 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 experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches from staff. Staff knew children well and cared for them sensitively in line with their care needs. They chatted to children about their home life and welcomed them warmly into the play space. For example, staff chatted with children at the lunch table about visiting the Christmas light switch on in the local town. This helped children feel safe and supported their wellbeing.

Staff had developed strong relationships with families. Parents were invited into the building and play spaces at the start and end of the sessions. Staff spent quality time chatting with parents about their children's day and individual needs. One parent told us, "There is never any rush at pick up and drop off, I feel welcome to discuss anything." New families were being welcomed into the service while their children settled, parents shared how they found the transitions supportive to both them and their children. This created a warm ethos that encouraged strong relationships and attachments for children.

Staff had made improvements to the lunch and snack experiences for children. Children enjoyed a sociable lunch and snack time that supported their independence. They helped set the table attractively with table covers, real crockery and flowers. Staff spent some time chatting with the children about their day as they ate together. Children self-selected their own foods and drinks and helped clear away their crockery. Food was nutritious, and staff catered for allergies and dietary needs well. In contrast, some staff were task focussed as they organised children going up to select their lunch from a trolley. We suggested sitting with children and allowing them to self-select from serving dishes at the table. This would allow them to be more focussed on chatting and leading the conversations with children. We were confident the service would continue to reflect and further improve the lunchtime experience.

The service stored and administered medication safely. The medication policy and procedures were in line with best practice guidance. Staff knew the procedure well and were confident in administering medication safely. This supported children's health and wellbeing.

All children received a personal plan drawn together using wellbeing indicators; safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included (SHANARRI). Plans were created in partnership with parents and reviewed and updated regularly. One parent told us, "My child has attended for seven weeks, and we have reviewed her plan and created targets." This meant plans contained the key information that staff needed, to respond sensitively, quickly and compassionately to changes in a child's life.

Staff worked proactively with other professionals and families to support children to reach their full potential. For example, staff had very good links and relationships with the neighbouring nursery where most children transitioned from when starting at the service. Both services were on the same campus and children became familiar with the staff from both settings as they had seen them within the grounds and at shared events. A staff member from the neighbouring service told us how the collaborative approaches were supporting children and families. This supported transitions to be nurturing, and smooth for children and families.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. Staff planned high-quality experiences to support children's development linked to their interests. They had a good balance of high-quality spontaneous learning and adult intentional planned learning. This supports children's play, learning and development.

The environments were developmentally appropriate, and staff set out resources attractively to spark children's curiosity imagination, thinking, and develop their skills. For example, the well-resourced block play area and home corner was rich in real life and loose part resources. Children used these well to extend their imagination. Additionally, staff sang with children and read stories to children throughout the day in all playrooms and outdoors. This meant children benefitted from staff who facilitated high-quality play and learning experiences that supported their wellbeing and enhanced their skills.

Full Gaelic immersion was a key strength in the Gaelic playroom. Staff always spoke in Gaelic, to children and each other. They planned experiences to expand children's language and skills. Opportunities were rich and supportive to children's development. For example, opportunities were available for children to learn about colours, numbers, shapes, and emotions using Gaelic language. Children who attended the Gaelic learner's room, were supported with rich opportunities to extend their language development and this included opportunities to learn new Gaelic words and phrases. We concluded children benefitted from rich learning opportunities facilitated well by staff to support and extend their language and communication skills.

Children chose to spend a lot of time playing outdoors which was facilitated well by staff. Free flow arrangements were in place that supported children to access the outdoor area throughout the full day. Children were joining in risky and challenging play when using climbing, loose part materials, and climbing up hills. This developed their physical skills and movement and supported their wellbeing.

Staff planned experiences weekly in response to children interests and stages of development. Planning formats were linked to national curriculum, and children's rights. Staff considered differentiation when planning experiences. This ensured they supported a wide range of stages of development. They had areas of responsibility within the plan and met weekly to discuss planning for individual children. As a result, children were making good progress. This meant planning was responsive to children's interest and stages of development. Additionally, it supported staff to gather children's progress, highlight achievements and plan next steps.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through wider play opportunities beyond the nursery setting. This included visits to the library, shops, care home, and Lews Castle. This enhanced their play and learning and community links.

Staff recorded children's learning in observations, that were shared on planning walls, within planning documentation, and on an online app. Parents had access to the online app, which meant they felt included in their children's learning experience in nursery. Next steps and targets for learning were identified to support children's development and progress; however, this was not shared on the online app. We discussed this with management, and they agreed it would be beneficial to share this with families. Overall, we found learning and development was tracked to establish children's progress and support their continuous learning.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

The setting was comfortable, welcoming, and furnished to a good standard. Play spaces benefitted from natural light and ventilation through open doors and windows. Children had areas to rest and relax. Material and soft lighting had been used to support a more homely feel. This sent a message to children that they mattered.

Children were cared for across three play spaces. Two of these play spaces supported full Gaelic immersion, and the other two supported Gaelic learners. Children benefitted from free flow access from each play space to a well-resourced outdoor area. All indoor and outdoor spaces were sensitively structured, and resources were set out attractively in response to children's interests. This meant play spaces were developmentally appropriate and supported children's interests, learning and development.

Overall, good arrangements were in place for monitoring, maintenance, and repair for the building. A janitor was on-site and reported maintenance to the local authority for swift repair. Staff completed daily risk assessments, and visually checked play spaces were safe. We highlighted additional factors that management should consider in the risk assessing of the outdoor areas. For example, removing stagnant water, and repositioning furniture to ensure it supported children's safety. Staff were very proactive and moved the resources during the inspection. Further to this, risk assessments were updated and shared with the new control measures. This contributed to children being cared for in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment.

Staff demonstrated an understanding of their role in keeping children safe. A register was in place, along with secure door entry to the building. New signage had been displayed, and gates had been made more secure around the nursery perimeter. Staff were observed checking and updating the register as children arrived and left the setting with their adult. Staff deployed themselves in areas of the garden to ensure everyone could supervise children as they played. We concluded this helped keep children safe and supported staff to account for children while they attended the service.

The service had a clear infection prevention and control policy and implemented several procedures to reduce the spread of infection. For example, playrooms and resources were clean, and staff practiced effective handwashing. Children washed their hands when coming into the playroom and before mealtimes. In contrast to this good practice, we noted some improvements could be made in other areas to prevent the spread of infection. This included safe washing of children's dishes after meals and promoting handwashing with children after mealtimes. We highlighted these issues with the staff and the management team. On the second day of inspection, we observed all children wash their hands after meals, and new arrangements were in place to wash dishes safely out with the playroom. We were satisfied that some of these points were rectified during the inspection. This contributed to keeping children protected from the spread of infection.

Children's sensitive and personal information was stored securely. Staff had access to this to support the care of children. We concluded children's information was securely stored and managed well.

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.

The vision values and aims were agreed in partnership with families across the nursery and school through effective consultation. The vision was displayed and celebrated across the service. This meant the management and staff team had successfully embedded a shared vision, that supported high-quality practice, and represented the views of all children, staff, families and the community.

We found the management and staff team valued their corporate responsibility and relationships across the island community. For example, staff had come together with other services to share and develop good practice. Further to this, staff had facilitated recruitment and information sessions. This supported potential new students into enrolling in training programmes for early learning and childcare. This had potential to develop high-quality outcomes and experiences for children across the wider island community.

The management team and staff team were meaningfully using evidence-based approaches, self-evaluation tool kits and best practice guidance to successfully self-evaluate the service. Staff had protected time to look at their practice and evaluate this against the best practice guidance. This information was then used to influence further improvements. For example, reviewing their environment using audit tools had supported them to be rich in literacy and numeracy. Additionally, a wide range of monitoring was taking place in line with the improvement plan. Agreed actions were shared and revisited at future points to capture progress and measure change. We concluded, children were benefitting from robust self-evaluation and improvement plans that were leading to continuous improvements.

A whole team approach to improvement was evident. Roles and responsibilities were clear, and the skilled management team worked well together. Playleader roles were being developed to support and improve practice. They had a key role in gathering evidence to support self-evaluation and guide staff with practice and personal development. Equally, seniors were supported and guided by the managers with their own practice and how they supported others. This meant children benefitted from a team who were reflective, and keen to provide a high-quality service.

The staff and management team used various methods to communicate well with families. This included newsletters, online apps, social media and wall displays. Parents commented positively on the communication and relationships they had with staff and management. One parent said, "I get regular updates on my child's learning experiences, both at pick up and on the social platforms." This supported positive relationships and kept families informed and involved with the life of the service and their children's learning.

Children, staff, and families were meaningfully involved and influenced change within the setting. All families who provided feedback agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "My child and I are involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service." When people's views were gathered, they were analysed and actions agreed. The actions and follow up progress were shared with families through various communication methods. This meant children benefitted from staff and management who valued people's views and used these effectively to develop the service.

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.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring the service was always appropriately staffed. The staffing rota ensured enough staff were in place across the full day to meet children's needs, provide high-quality care and learning for children, and allow for staff to get a break.

Staff were deployed across the service in line with their skills and experience. Staff were kind and caring towards children and each other. This promoted a positive ethos and built strong relationships. Playleaders were in place in all three playrooms. They effectively supported and mentored staff as well as carrying out additional duties placed upon them. This created a flexible and supportive ethos where staff supported each other, working together as a team to benefit the children.

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. The management team were at early stages of using Scottish Government's 'Early Learning and Childcare - National Induction Resource'. We agreed this would be beneficial to staff and children in supporting them to provide high-quality care play and learning to children.

We observed examples of good communication and team working taking place; for example, staff shared when children were moving around the service from inside to outdoors. Staff told us they worked well as a team. Parents' feedback about the staff team was very positive. Comments we received included:

"All staff are welcoming and engaging. They clearly care about all the children and make sure they have a positive experience."

"The staff are friendly, I have never had any problems with them."

"Staff have a strong nurturing approach, my child feels happy and safe."

We concluded staff were working well as a team to meet children's needs and care for children safely.

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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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