

Westray Junior High School Nursery Day Care of Children

Pierowall
Westray
Orkney
KW17 2DH

Telephone: 01857 677 353

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
24 April 2025

Service provided by:
Orkney Islands Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001951

Service no:
CS2003016055

About the service

Westray Junior High School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 16 children, from the age of two years to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery is operated by Orkney Islands Council. The head teacher is the registered manager of the nursery. The nursery operates term time only. At the time of the inspection there were two children in attendance.

The nursery is located within Westray Junior High School, a community school situated on the island of Westray. The nursery premises consists of a large playroom, with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area, which contains a range of loose parts and open-ended resources which extend and enrich the children's imaginative play and learning experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 April 2025. 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 two children using the service
- spoke with two staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received online feedback from one family.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing.
- Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their own play and learning experiences.
- Children accessed an environment that was warm and welcoming.
- Snack and lunchtime was a positive, relaxing and sociable time for children.
- The staff and leadership team had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families.
- Robust quality assurance processes needed to be developed around safeguarding procedures.
- There were clear procedures in place to manage lone working arrangements and staff were confident in implementing these.

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?	3 - Adequate
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 quality key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were very happy, settled and having fun. They experienced genuine warmth and caring approaches, supporting children to feel nurtured and loved. Staff were compassionate and responsive in their interactions, resulting in very strong attachments being formed. This contributed to an inclusive ethos and meant all children were confident and engaged in their play experiences.

Staff managed minor disputes between children very well. They skilfully empowered children to think about their choices and how this impacted on their peers. This demonstrated a very calm and supportive approach which helped children regulate their emotions and enabled them to resolve minor conflicts. As a result, children were gaining confidence and skills in regulating their individual emotional security and wellbeing.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. Staff worked in partnership with parents to ensure effective information sharing. As a result, staff had a very good knowledge of children's holistic needs, which enabled them to provide continuity in their care. Staff worked proactively with other professionals which supported them to identify strategies of support based on individual needs. Staff were attuned to children's individual needs and used strategies consistently and effectively, supporting them to reach their full potential.

Snack and lunchtime was a positive, relaxing and sociable time for children. They were fully involved in the planning and preparation of snack. They demonstrated a real sense of pride in the responsibility they had been given. Children were offered a wealth of opportunities for developing independence. They confidently poured their own drinks, were provided with opportunities for choice and responsibly placed their plates in the dishwasher. Staff sat with children during snack encouraging rich discussions, supporting language and communication skills.

Children and families were valued and respected. Parents were welcomed into the service to drop off and collect their children. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff, and enabled opportunity for information to be shared between nursery and home.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their own play and learning experiences. Staff demonstrated a genuine interest in supporting play as they valued the importance of children having fun. Interesting, exciting materials and provocations promoted children's curiosity and creativity. They were enabled to make independent choices about where they played and moved confidently between the playroom and the outdoors. Staff interacted skilfully to support children's curiosities. This meant that interests were responded to in the moment as staff engaged with children to deepen their learning.

Children were very well supported to develop their skills in language and literacy and consolidate their learning through play. Staff confidently scaffolded their learning experiences, for example, staff provided new vocabulary through play to extend their learning. Opportunities for numeracy and maths were naturally woven into children's play and learning. Children explored counting, number, time, size, and shape through everyday experiences. A range of mark making resources supported children to engage in early writing through their play experiences. For example, outside children enjoyed painting the shed with water, developing fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Children's play and learning was enhanced through strong connections to the local community. This included, walks, trips to the park and a recent visit to the community hall. These experiences stimulated children's interests and curiosities.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interests. Children's learning and development was captured throughout planning floor books, wall displays and personal learning. Regular assessment and evaluations of children's individual learning supported planning approaches to promote continued success and individual achievement.

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, therefore we evaluated this quality key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children accessed an environment that was warm and welcoming. Playrooms were decorated in neutral colours which promoted a natural, calm environment. This fostered a welcoming atmosphere for the children. The addition of homely touches, fairy lights and carefully considered furnishings promoted a feeling of cosiness. This supported children to feel valued and gave a strong message that they matter.

Children had opportunities to rest and relax in safe, cosy areas. Blankets and cushions were available for children to independently access. This enabled children to seek out a calm area where they could have some individual time if needed. This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Carefully considered play spaces took account of children's developmental needs. Children's interests and curiosities were reflected in the environment which contained an extensive variety of high-quality provision that supported play. The staff team ensured that areas were well presented and organised. This meant resources were readily available to provoke children's interests and supported them to explore the environment independently and encouraged imaginative play.

Children had direct access to the outdoor garden space, giving them good opportunities for free flow play between indoors and outdoors. They moved freely between the play areas and engaged in a variety of outdoor play experiences. Children used the outdoor space with confidence and experienced enjoyment, challenge and fun. Areas to climb, run and balance outdoors provided opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills.

Staff implemented infection prevention and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. Children were encouraged to wash hands frequently and at appropriate times. Established routines meant children were supported to be healthy.

Staff had good knowledge and understanding of our SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) keeping children safe campaign and this supported them to ensure children were accounted for at all times. This created a safe and secure environment where children could enjoy a variety of play experiences supported by effective staff practice.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager and staff team recognised the need to review the current vision and aims, to reflect the aspirations of their children, families, partners and the wider community. Plans were in place to implement this review to help the service identify and understand more fully what is important for children and their families as the service moves forward.

The staff team and children had revisited their core values, and these were evident in staff practice and interactions. For example, staff demonstrated the value of teamwork in their discussions with children by modelling cooperative behaviour, active listening and mutual respect. Staff valued children's voice as they provided opportunities for children to share their ideas and influence their learning. Through observations of play and daily discussions, staff responded to children's interests and suggestions. This resulted in children being empowered, valued and allowed them to drive change.

The staff and leadership team had a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and their families. Some quality assurance processes allowed meaningful opportunities for the leadership team to review and monitor various aspects of the service. The improvement plan had identified priorities for development with clear actions on how these would be achieved. This meant that the improvements were relevant and supported improving outcomes for children and their families. However, appropriate skills and knowledge around safeguarding were not consistently demonstrated. More robust quality assurance processes needed to be developed to ensure safeguarding procedures are adhered to at all times and children are protected from harm. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

The service had used best practice guidance to implement changes and review aspects of provision together which included a refreshed approach to planning children's learning, and improvements to interactions and the outdoor environment. Staff were encouraged to be part of service developments, contribute ideas and reflect on their practice together. This demonstrated the commitment of staff to the ongoing development of the service and improving outcomes for children. We spoke with the manager about developing opportunities for the service to look outwards and reflect on practice with colleagues from other settings to provide time for further professional dialogue and peer support.

Areas for improvement

1.
To ensure children are safeguarded and protected from harm, the provider should, at a minimum:

- a) Develop robust quality assurance processes in relation to safeguarding procedures.
- b) Ensure everyone working in the service are competent and knowledgeable about national, local, and the service's own child protection procedures and 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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 quality key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing staff team. They were enthusiastic and committed to providing a positive experience for the children in their care. They were warm, friendly and responsive in their approach and demonstrated positive team working, which promoted a happy and secure environment for children. They modelled positive social interactions, both verbal and nonverbal, supporting children to develop an understanding of relationships.

Children experienced a consistent routine because there was stability and predictability in the staff team. Children and families were building strong and trusting relationships with staff that promoted positive outcomes. Staff communicated well with each other to ensure there was consistency for children. Busier times of the day, such as mealtimes were recognised and well planned for. This ensured staff could fully meet children's needs at these times.

Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision and quality engagement with children. Staff placed themselves thoughtfully to ensure all children's individual needs were well-considered. As a result, children benefitted from a very calm and positive experience.

There were clear procedures in place to manage lone working arrangements and staff were confident in implementing these. As a result, we were confident that lone working arrangements were planned to protect children and keep them safe. We asked the management team to continue monitoring how staff deployment was planned to meet children's needs, rights and choices as they adapted to the changing needs of the community.

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?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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