

Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Aberdour Pre-School Playgroup Day Care of Children

Community Centre
Shore Road
Aberdour
Burntisland



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: Aberdour Playgroup Management Committee

Service provider number: SP2003001679

Care service number: CS2003007704

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

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

What the service does well

The provider, manager and staff team were skilled and motivated. They worked well together, and with parents, to ensure positive outcomes for the children who attend. Children enjoy their time in a safe, supportive and fun environment. They also benefit from being involved in regular and varied outdoor activities including weekly nature kindergarten sessions.

What the service could do better

The provider should continue to be support staff to access relevant training and keep up to date with current best practice.

What the service has done since the last inspection

Continuity of staffing had helped the playgroup provide a very good standard of care and support to the families. Children were becoming aware of living things and the world around them through attending kindergarten sessions and taking part in recycling. This contributed to the playgroup achieving a green Eco-Schools flag, of which they were very proud.

Conclusion

Aberdour Playgroup provides a nurturing environment for children and their families. The activities and experiences on offer supported the children's learning and wellbeing.

We concluded that a very good service was being provided to the children and their families.

1 About the service we inspected

The service is provided by Aberdour Playgroup Management Committee. The committee employs a manager to manage the playgroup on a day-to-day basis. The playgroup provides child care for children from 2 years 6 months to an age to attend primary school.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children at any given time. In total, there were 42 children registered to use the playgroup, of whom 24 were present during our inspection visit.

The service may operate between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

The playgroup operates from Aberdour Community Centre. The building comprises a number of halls, kitchen, toilet and changing facilities. The children are based within the large hall. There is an outdoor area. The playgroup is close to the village centre and is within walking distance of various facilities including parks and beach.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of care and support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of environment - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website

www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

We wrote this report after an unannounced inspection visit which took place on Monday 14 March 2016, from 10:30am to 2:00pm.

The provider completed an annual return and a self assessment document, as requested by us.

We asked the service to issue questionnaires to parents, in order to allow us to take account of their views. Nine completed questionnaires were returned to us.

We asked the service to issue questionnaires to staff. Two completed questionnaires were returned to us.

In this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources, including the following:

- discussion with the manager and staff
- relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents
- observations of staff interaction with children
- personal plans of some children who attend the playgroup
- feedback from parents via our questionnaires and during our visit
- viewing equipment and the environment (for example, is the playgroup clean, is it set out well?)

We have taken account of all of the above information when writing this report.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

We received a self assessment document from the service as part of the inspection process. The self assessment enabled the manager and staff to tell us about what they do well and to highlight any improvements planned. The manager assessed various aspects of the service as being good (grade 4) and very good (grade 5). We have awarded grades of very good (grade 5) against the statements we considered during the inspection.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We saw that the children were familiar with playgroup routines. They were happy to share their experiences with us and wanted to tell us about the things they liked about playgroup, as follows:

"I'm the king of the castle. The castle is beside the golf course." (Climbing frame)

"I want to play that game with him."

"I made this. It is a daffodil."

"I'm doing the puzzle."

"I used to be two."

"That was good fun." (Having photograph taken)

"I've made Sponge Bob."

"The dragons had a battle and fell off the cliff and we found them and we are going to take them back." (Block play)

"We're having a lot of fun. I have to make the dinner." (House area)

Taking carers' views into account

Our questionnaires were distributed by the manager to the parents of children who attend the playgroup and nine were returned to us. All of these parents commented positively about the care their children received. For example, in response to our questionnaire statement, "Overall, I am happy with the quality of care my child receives in this service", seven of these parents strongly agreed and two agreed. Parents were also able to make individual comments if they wished to do so. We received the following comments (anonymised):

"The playgroup staff create a wonderful supportive environment for the children. It feels very safe and parents are fully engaged. Playgroup staff are very proactive and identify any issues early on and deal with them appropriately in consultation with the parents."

"My child has been at playgroup for a year. I have no worries or concerns that he is in the best possible place for all his learning needs. Playgroup are always out and about exploring the local area (beach, park, castle, woods and shops). The quality of interactions he receives is exceptional."

"Aberdour playgroup is a warm nurturing environment. The staff are welcoming and enthusiastic and I feel my child's needs are respected."

"The staff really make it a fantastic environment to learn and play. There is always lots of information and photographs to share their time in playgroup too."

"The staff team at Aberdour are exceptional. I couldn't think of anywhere better to place my child."

"It's fantastic. She has come on so much since she started."

Other comments are included in the body of this report.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 2

“We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.”

Service Strengths

We found this service was performing at a very good level with regard to this statement. We gathered evidence of this from discussion with the manager and staff, reference to children's personal plans, our own observations and taking account of feedback from children and their parents.

The manager and staff liaised with parents to ensure that children could be supported appropriately in the playgroup. We saw children and parents were welcomed by staff. This helped children to feel secure and we saw that they settled quickly on arrival at the playgroup. Parents had the opportunity to exchange information and discuss their child's care with staff, should they wish to do so. Continuity of staffing had helped staff to form positive relationships with families.

The children were confident and engaged in their learning. They had free choice of activities and planning was responsive to their needs and interests. They could make choices about things including the play they wanted to take part in, what toys and materials to use, who to play with, when to change activities and when to have snack. Staff engaged in high quality interactions with the children, talking to them about what they were doing and supporting their learning. Children's learning was further supported by the staff skills and their knowledge of when to intervene in the children's play. We heard staff using positive praise when working with the children to build their confidence and self-esteem. Parents commented positively on the support and encouragement staff provided to their children to meet their individual needs.

Children were able to choose independently from a variety of craft materials and media to create collages, paintings and models. We saw a small group of children made good use of the resources available and made cards for their parents and friends.

The snack routine helped develop children's skills and independence. Most children served themselves while others asked for help from the staff member in the area. The menu was displayed for parents to see and know what their child was offered, which contributed to continuity of care. Parents provided a packed lunch for their child. Parents who returned a questionnaire indicated they were satisfied with the food provided. Tooth brushing was an established part of the daily routine, which supported children to develop good dental hygiene routines.

The children were asked if they wanted to play outside or remain indoors. Staff supported the children's choices and both groups were able to play where they wished. (Staff told us that children accessed the outdoors most days.) They supported the children to be independent by allowing time for children to put on and take off their jackets and shoes, when going outdoors. A group of children were taken outdoors to search for mini-beasts and places where wildlife may live. Staff helped the children to use bar graphs to record the type and number of mini-beasts they found. The children also used books to find out information about the mini-beasts. The activity captured and sustained the children's interest.

Staff had used personal learning journeys (PLJs) to document children's progress. These contained observations, photographs and examples of their work and were readily accessible to children and parents.

The playgroup had a procedure in place to enable staff to administer medication, with written parental permission. Likewise, a record was kept of any accidents which occurred in the service, which parents countersigned. This demonstrated they had been informed about the accident and the action taken.

Overall, the children experienced a calm, relaxed environment which was conducive to learning. The nurturing approach of staff helped children to feel safe and secure. We saw the staff engaged well with the children and were responsive to their needs. As a result, children were motivated and able to benefit from the resources available.

Areas for improvement

The manager and staff plan to continue to develop children's experiences taking account of the guidance documents Curriculum for Excellence and Building the Ambition.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 5

“The accommodation and resources are suitable for the needs of the service users. ”

Service Strengths

We found this service was performing at a very good level with regard to this statement. We gathered evidence of this from discussions with the manager and staff, our observations of the playgroup environment and resources and taking account of feedback from parents.

The playrooms were of a suitable size for the playgroup. Furnishings and play resources were in good condition and attractively presented for the children to use. The range of resources included construction sets, puzzles, books and art materials thereby providing scope for children to have fun and to try out new activities in a supportive environment. The service had made use of a Fife wide resource base (toy library) to increase and extend the range of toys and equipment available to the children.

A kitchen area was situated nearby and used by staff to prepare snacks.

The children's toilet and changing area, including hand-wash basins, could be easily accessed from the playroom.

The staff provided a varied and interesting range of indoor and outdoor experiences which promoted children's curiosity. Learning opportunities were further extended in the community through nature kindergarten sessions, visits to Broomhall Garden, primary school and local play park, for example. Staff had involved children in planting and growing vegetables and flowers. This meant children had the opportunity to be active outdoors where they could enjoy exercise and discover nature and wildlife throughout the year. Children were becoming aware of living things. This was a major strength of the service. A parent commented "The beach is good. They have so much fun."

These activities had contributed to the playgroup being awarded a green Eco-Schools flag. This achievement was celebrated by a photographer visiting during to take a photograph of the children with the flag. Children told us about some of the actions they had taken.

"Turn the lights off."

"Turn off the taps and save water."

"Watched things grow."

"Put litter in the bin."

Overall, children had access to a wide range of easily accessible activities which supported them to learn thorough play and made their time spent in the service enjoyable. They also benefited from spending time in a wide range of outdoor environments.

Areas for improvement

The layout of the premises did not allow the children to experience a free-flow between indoors and outdoors. Staff were aware that this limited children's choices and the manager told us about a plan to commission a bespoke, temporary fence which can be easily erected for the duration of the session and removed when not required.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 4

“We ensure that everyone working in the service has an ethos of respect towards service users and each other.”

Service Strengths

We found that the service was performing at a very good level with regard to this statement. We gathered evidence of this from discussion with the manager and staff, our own observations of staff practices and taking account of feedback from parents.

There was an ethos of working in partnership with families who use the service and this created a welcoming and respectful environment.

We saw that staff displayed a caring, respectful manner towards the children and worked to the best of their ability to meet their needs. They were good role models for children. Staff intervened appropriately to support children to treat each other nicely and to take turns which helped raise their awareness of showing respect to their friends.

Parents were encouraged to participate in the life of the playgroup including joining the management committee, undertaking duty rota and taking part in nature kindergarten sessions, for example. Children were welcome to borrow books or play@home bags, therefore encouraging good links between playgroup and home. This encouraged effective working relationships with parents which contributed to good outcomes for children.

The manager and eligible members of staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). (People working in social care services have to work to the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers and register within set timescales. The code sets out standards for workers' conduct which helps to protect children.)

Overall, children experienced continuity of care because the staff team was stable. This had allowed staff to get to know families well and establish positive working relationships with them.

Areas for improvement

The provider, manager and staff should continue to demonstrate an ethos of respect towards children and their families, each other and the wider community.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 4

“We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.”

Service Strengths

We found that the service was performing at a very good level with regard to this statement. We gathered evidence of this from discussion with the manager and staff, our findings, reference to written information including the service's own self assessment document and by taking account of feedback from parents.

The service is provided by a voluntary management committee (provider) comprising parents of children who attend the playgroup. This gave parents the opportunity to stand for election to the committee and assess and influence the quality of service. The manager attended most committee meetings which enabled her to exchange information and views about the service.

The playgroup benefits from a manager who is highly qualified, enthusiastic, motivated and professional. Systems were in place to support the on-going evaluation of the playgroup by the provider, manager and staff team. For example, the manager and staff consulted informally during the playgroup day to share information and discuss any matters relevant to the smooth running of the service. Formal staff meetings were held. There was potential for staff to raise issues and make comments and suggestions which might influence change.

The manager submitted a self assessment, having evaluated the service against a range of quality themes and statements. Strengths of the service were identified and priorities for improvement highlighted.

The playgroup was registered to provide preschool education in partnership with the local authority education service. This provision was monitored by the local authority and this created an opportunity for the provider and staff to engage in dialogue with, and get feedback from an external service.

A playgroup improvement plan was in place which reflected both key strengths and areas for improvement. There was evidence that the manager had made progress towards actioning the proposed developments. This showed that there was a commitment to develop the playgroup and improve outcomes for children.

The manager was broadly aware of regulatory issues and had submitted formal notifications to the Care Inspectorate, as required. A complaints procedure was in place, and this created opportunities for parents to raise any concerns they may have about the service.

Overall, we could see that there were opportunities for families and external stakeholders to be involved in assessing and improving the quality of care and support. This supported the further development of the playgroup, which, in turn, will benefit the children who attend.

Areas for improvement

The provider, manager and team should continue to work together to build on the improvements which have been achieved. This will ensure that children continue to experience positive outcomes.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

There is no additional information.

9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
1 Nov 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good
11 Nov 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good Not Assessed Not Assessed
3 Jun 2010	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	4 - Good Not Assessed 5 - Very Good Not Assessed
1 Apr 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good 6 - Excellent 5 - Very Good

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