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Care service inspection report

Hopscotch Playgroup

Day Care of Children

Macduff Community Education Centre
Duff Street
Macduff
AB44 1PT
Telephone: 01261 832759

Inspected by: Sandra Robinson

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 27 January 2012

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Service provided by:

Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:

SP2003000029

Care service number:

CS2003002553

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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	4	Good
Quality of Environment		N/A
Quality of Staffing		N/A
Quality of Management and Leadership	4	Good

What the service does well

The manager and staff appeared to have formed good relationships with both children and parents/carers.

Good teamwork was demonstrated.

Children's ideas/suggestions had been recorded and taken into account when planning activities.

The children had taken part in different learning experiences in the community such as autumn walks and trip to the shops, playing in the rain.

A well positioned notice board and newsletters helped parents/carers to know what was happening in the service.

What the service could do better

Consideration was being given to introducing home to school books for the children and parents/carers.

To finalise the format of the service questionnaire so that it could be issued to parents/carers.

The topic of good hand-washing would be re-visited with the children and include staff keeping an overview.

The manager and staff introduce a more systematic and rigorous approach to self evaluation and put in place a programme of supervision and an annual appraisal for staff.

What the service has done since the last inspection

The service has continued to look at ways of involving parents/carers, inviting them to put forward suggestions about snacks and give talks to the children about their jobs/interests/skills.

The staff were beginning to liaise more closely with the school nursery to aid transition.

Children had been provided with a range of experiences to help with the learning and development.

Conclusion

We saw that the service continued to look at different ways that children and parents/carers could be involved. Children appeared to have fun at the service whilst learning, and they were able to choose what they wanted to do and put forward ideas for things like activities and snacks. Staff asked children questions to help with their learning and children were seen to respond well to praise.

Parents said that they were very happy with the service given to their children. A parent said they had not been using the service for long but their child had settled very well.

The management and staff continued to manage change in a way that had not affected the direct service to the children and parents/carers.

The Care Inspectorate questionnaires indicated that parents strongly agreed or agreed that overall they were happy with the quality of care that their children receive at the service. Written comments included:

'staff worked with my child so they gained confidence and built relationships with other children'
'there is always a wide variety of activities for the children which the service keeps changing'.

Who did this inspection

Sandra Robinson

1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate, also known as Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS), is the new regulatory body for care services in Scotland. It will award grades for services based on the findings of inspections. The history of grades that services have previously been awarded by the Care Commission will also be available on the Care Inspectorate website.

Hopscotch Playgroup is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children aged 2½ years to not yet attending primary school. It operates from a designated room within the primary school, and also has direct access to a secure outdoor play area.

This service was registered with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland on 1 April 2011.

The aims and objectives of the service are:

to welcome children and parents into a safe, bright, stimulating and healthy environment
encourage children to develop caring relationships through mutual respect and trust within a secure and stimulating setting
allow children to learn through a broad and balanced range of activities
to provide challenging experiences that respond to children's individual needs
to evaluate regularly the quality of service we provide and plan for improvement accordingly.

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

Quality of Care and Support - Grade 4 - Good
Quality of Environment - N/A
Quality of Staffing - N/A
Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 4 - 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.scswis.com or by calling us on 0845 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 compiled the report following an unannounced inspection. The inspection was carried by the Care Inspectorate inspector Sandra Robinson. The inspection took place on 27 January 2012 between 9.00am and 12.15pm.

Three Care Inspectorate parents/carers questionnaires were completed and returned as part of the inspection.

In this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources, including relevant sections of policies, procedures, records and other documents:

- observing interaction between the staff and children
- supporting evidence from the up to date self assessment
- service newsletter
- information/notice board
- individual learning profiles
- mind mapping
- children's questionnaires
- activity plans
- improvement plan
- parent letters/notes
- training records
- photographs
- wall displays
- Care Inspectorate questionnaires.

Discussion took place with:
- the manager (Headteacher)
- 2 staff members
- 3 parents face to face

All of the above information was taken into account during the inspection process and was reported on.

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.firelawscotland.org

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.

The Care Inspectorate received a completed self assessment document from the service. This was completed to a good standard and gave relevant information for each of the Quality Themes and Statements. The service identified what they thought they did well and some areas for future development.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

During the inspection we chatted to some of the children using the service. Three had been happy to show their individual folders and talk about some of the things they had been doing. They said that they had fun at playgroup and they liked to see their friends. We saw that the children were keen to help to make bird feeders which they were then going to take home and put in their garden. All of the children enjoyed playing outdoors and joined in with the group activity towards the end of the session.

The children responded well to the adults present and appeared confident, quite independent and familiar with daily routines.

Taking carers' views into account

Parents spoken with said that they were very happy with the service and found staff easy to talk to and always available when taking their child to and from the service. A parent said that their child had not been at the service very long but they had settled well and enjoyed going.

The 3 Care Inspectorate questionnaires returned as part of the inspection indicated that parents/carers strongly agreed or agreed that they were happy with the quality of care their child received from the service.

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: 4 - Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service strengths

The service continued to seek the views of parents/carers and children using the service in the following ways:

Parents/carers had been invited to take part in the group by volunteering to help with fund-raising events such as a welly waddle with the children and walks to the park and shops. They had also been invited to celebration events such as Robert Burns Day, and an open event had also been planned.

A notice board and information table had been placed in the playroom for parents to view when taking their children to and from the service. Policies and procedures were available for parents to see; there were also notices of planned events and activities.

The service had not issued questionnaires since the last inspection as they were being reviewed and updated. In the previous months a form had been sent to parents/carers asking them if they would be willing to visit the service to talk to the children about their job/skills as they would be more than welcome. They had also been asked to put forward suggestions/ideas about snacks for the children.

The service continued to produce a newsletter to keep parents/carers informed of what was happening in the service. It included reminders about outdoor clothing, hand washing and toileting, key events and the notice board and also asked again for any ideas related to healthy snacks.

Parents/carers entered the playroom at the end of the session and we saw that there was time to chat with staff.

Children were asked for their ideas/suggestions through mind mapping. We saw that activity plans took account of the children's ideas/suggestions. Some of the

children had completed a short questionnaire of what they liked doing best, what they would like to do when playing outside and what to eat for snack.

Children's learning folders were readily available within the playroom. We saw that they included photographs of the child taking part in different activities and also some of their own work. Three of the children had been keen to show us their folders and talk about the things they had been doing. We saw that a parent and child took time to look at their folder at the end of the session.

There were a number of displays within the room showing the children enjoying different learning experiences both within the playgroup and out in the community.

The Care Inspectorate questionnaires indicated that the majority of parents/carers strongly agreed that they were kept informed about what was happening in the service, for example through newsletters and information boards.

Parents spoken with said that staff kept them well informed of what was happening and they only had to ask if there was anything they needed to know.

Areas for improvement

The self assessment form identified that:
consideration was being given to introducing home to school books
to finalise the format of the service questionnaire so that it could be issued to parents/carers
have a format for having more detailed information about a new child

Staff continue to build on the current good practice, and continue to put in place ways that the children and their parents/carers can put forward ideas/suggestions and give feedback about the service.

The service provides parents/carers with the summary findings of consultation exercises, such as a questionnaire and how they have or intend to respond to any suggestions/comments.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3
We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service strengths

The service was in the process of adopting the council policies and procedures which included medication and infection control and child protection.

Staff asked children to wash their hands before snack; table cloths were used on the snack tables. Staff followed appropriate practices when preparing and providing snacks to the children. The service promoted healthy snacks and children were encouraged to help themselves with the snack under the supervision of staff. We saw that it was also a nice social time where children sat and chatted with each other. A pictorial snack board had been introduced which was proving to work well for all of the children.

Activities also took account of promoting healthy foods. Recently the children had been involved in making lentil soup.

The Care Inspectorate questionnaires indicated that parents/carers strongly agreed or agreed that the service provided a healthy and well-balanced diet which met their child's dietary and cultural needs.

Parents were asked to complete a children's information form as part of the registration process which included allergies and special requirements. Staff had received updated training to administer emergency treatment of severe allergic reactions.

There was also an appropriate system for recording accident/incidents which requested the signature of a parent/carer.

Staff had completed training in first aid and food hygiene.

The children had the opportunity for active play, and outdoor play was promoted with children being outside most days. Children could access a secure play area directly from the playroom and we saw that children clearly enjoyed a period of outdoor play during the session, after putting on coats, hats and gloves. Children also used the school gym/sports hall each week.

Photographs showed children enjoying recent walks in the community, playing in the rain and learning about road safety. The service also had wet weather suits for outdoor use.

The Care Inspectorate questionnaires indicated that parents strongly agreed that their child regularly got fresh air and took part in energetic, physical play. A written comment was:

'my child started playgroup very shy and unsettled, they very quickly became happy and a lot more confident'.

Areas for improvement

The self assessment form identified that training in relation to first aid and emergency treatment remains up to date.

Where incidents occur, for example, an instance of a child biting another child, an incident record is completed for the child causing the biting which is then signed by the parent/carer.

During the inspection we saw that a number of children did not use soap when washing their hands or struggled to turn on the tap, meaning they only used the paper towel. It was acknowledged that some of the children had not been at the service for long. This was discussed with the staff and it was agreed that the topic of good hand-washing would be re-visited with staff keeping an overview.

The staff highlighted that having the toilets situated outwith the playroom and some distance away meant that a higher level of supervision was needed. Staff had tried to address this by asking parents to encourage their child to use the toilet before the service began. This remained a wider issue for consideration by the provider, namely the education department.

Staff remain updated and aware of issues and procedures related to child protection.

Grade awarded for this statement: 4 - Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment - NOT ASSESSED

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing - NOT ASSESSED

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - Good

Statement 1
We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service strengths
Information in Theme 1, Quality Statement 1, is also relevant for this statement.

The Care Inspectorate questionnaires indicated that parents/carers agreed that the service had involved them and their child in developing the service, for example asking for ideas and feedback.

Staff members were welcoming of parents' views. Parents who were spoken with at the time of inspection confirmed that they were always made welcome and that there was always the opportunity to speak to staff especially at the end of a session.

Areas for improvement
The self assessment form identified that:
parents/carers and children would be more involved in the evaluation of the service
evaluation documents such as questionnaires would focus on Quality Indicators linked to the themes for self evaluation in the early years
the integration and transition of the playgroup into the school management systems would continue.

The manager in consultation with all staff intended to put in place systems to include feedback from parents/carers and children in relation to management and leadership of the service.

Consideration is given to displaying the activity plan for the nursery on the notice board, and informing parents/carers of training completed by the staff.

Grade awarded for this statement: 4 - Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3
To encourage good quality care, we promote leadership values throughout the workforce.

Service strengths

The staff team had worked together for a few years; they presented as being a well formed team.

Staff said that there were regular opportunities for informal discussions about the service, which usually occurred daily either prior to or after the sessions. There was a sharing of roles and responsibilities between the staff group, taking account of the staff members' skills and experience. We saw that during the inspection a staff member led story time.

Training records showed that staff members had undertaken training relevant to their role, such as nutrition, speech and language and child development. Staff considered that they had been able to keep their skills up to date through training and they would also be involved in the school in-service day.

Discussion with staff members stated that they were in the process of becoming familiar with the education policies and procedures for early years. Staff members said that they were involved in the weekly planning meetings and they took on roles specific to their experience/expertise.

It was acknowledged that at the time of the inspection the service was in a transitional phase and was working more closely with the school nursery and the manager (Head Teacher). A meeting had been planned involving all staff from the playgroup and nursery.

Areas for improvement

The self assessment form identified that:
all staff would be involved in the review and evaluation of the playgroup and nursery aims and objectives so that they were in line with those of the school
to improve how staff share their learning from courses/training with each other and that of in-service activity.

It was acknowledged at feedback that there had been some changes in relation to the provider and management of the service since the last inspection and that it had been an uncertain time for staff. The recommendations made at the last inspection had not been actioned and are therefore continued.

The manager and staff introduce a more systematic and rigorous approach to self evaluation, using quality Indicators and a focus on children's experiences and progress (see recommendation 1).

The manager and staff stated a programme of supervision and an annual appraisal had not yet been established (see recommendation 2)

Grade awarded for this statement: 4 - Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 2

Recommendations

1. The manager and staff develop further a clear system for monitoring and evaluating the service.
   National Care Standards Early education and childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 13: Improving the service and Standard 14: Well-managed service

2. The manager introduces a regular programme of supervision and annual appraisal for all staff.
   National Care Standards Early education and childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 12: Confidence in staff and Standard 14: Well-managed service

4 Other information

Complaints

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

Enforcements

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

Additional Information

Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension, where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in SCSWIS re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

5 Summary of grades

Quality of Care and Support - 4 - Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 3	4 - Good
Quality of Environment - Not Assessed	
Quality of Staffing - Not Assessed	
Quality of Management and Leadership - 4 - Good	
Statement 1	4 - Good
Statement 3	4 - Good

6 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
8 Dec 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	4 - Good Not Assessed Not Assessed 3 - Adequate
26 Mar 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good 3 - Adequate
31 Mar 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate

All inspections and grades before 1 April 2011 are those reported by the former regulator of care services, the Care Commission.

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