

Little Einstein's Perth Day Care of Children

4A Whitefriars Crescent
Perth
PH2 0PA

Telephone: 01738 626700

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Service provided by:
Forth Care Limited

Service provider number:
SP2014012365

Care service number:
CS2014332127

About the service

Little Einstein's Nurseries are part of a group of six nurseries, which are situated in various parts of Scotland. Little Einstein's Perth is located in an industrial estate close to the town centre and other amenities. The nursery caters for the developing needs of children aged from six weeks to 14 years. The service also runs an after school club and offers school holiday care for those attending primary school. Children are cared for by staff in various rooms according to their age and stage of development. The nursery operates Monday - Friday offering both full and part-time sessions between 7:00am and 6:00pm.

The service was registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 150 children aged from six weeks to 14 years, 42 children from birth to two years, 50 children two to three years and 48 children three years and over. A minimum of two staff are to be present in an operating playroom/area at any time.

The staff consisted of several early years practitioners, modern early years apprentices, two deputy managers and a manager, a cook and a domestic assistant. Some of these posts were currently vacant. The service had their own training and administration service. The service stated the following principles of their service were:

- To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment for all-round care
- To help children develop intellectually through a balance of directed and free choice activities
- Continuity of care for all children and flexible care routines
- To create a stimulating and challenging environment, providing opportunities for learning through play and covering the five key areas
- To encourage children to develop self-control, self-direction and independence
- To develop self-expression through various activities such as drama, music, story telling, block building and other forms of play
- To provide a warm and welcome atmosphere with good staff, child and parent relationships
- To ensure a safe environment which protects children from harm, abuse and neglect
- Develop respect for individual and cultural differences
- Effective use of assessment information to identify needs and plan the next steps for learning and evaluating regularly to meet changing needs.

What people told us

We observed the children to be generally settled and familiar with nursery routines. Most children arrived happily at nursery and settled quickly at play. Many older children were seen to be bored and restless, they were not motivated by the activities and resources on offer. We spoke to several children who shared some views of their nursery experiences. One child told us that he liked playing with the train track 'but some trains were missing now - so it's not so good - we need to get new ones'. Some children told us that they liked to play outside.

We received six completed Care Inspectorate parental satisfaction questionnaires before the inspection visit and spoke to three parents about the service during the inspection. Four of the six parents who returned a questionnaire 'strongly agreed' and two 'agreed' that they were overall happy with the quality of care that their child receives in the service. Two of these parents 'disagreed' that staff worked with them to develop individual support for their child. One of these parents 'disagreed' that staff shared information about their child's learning and development. Feedback from parents was generally positive and evidenced a degree of parental confidence in the nursery. Parents' comments included:

'We have seen further improvement in the service and staff in the last four months'.

'We were a bit worried after reading the last inspection report but things have been ok and we are happy enough with the nursery. He seems to enjoy coming and is always talking about his friends here'.

However, one parent highlighted the need for improved cleanliness. She told us that:

'Cleanliness in the playrooms could be better. One Monday morning at 7:00am, I found that a potty had not been emptied since Friday'.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. These demonstrated their priorities for development and were further discussed during the inspection and in subsequent contacts with the manager and operations manager.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	2 - Weak
Quality of environment	1 - Unsatisfactory
Quality of staffing	2 - Weak
Quality of management and leadership	2 - Weak

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

From the evidence gathered during our inspection, we evaluated this quality theme as weak. We were disappointed and concerned by the lack of improvement made to care and support since the last inspection.

Some staff had clearly formed good relationships with children and parents and knew families well. However, the quality of staff relationships with children and parents was found to be variable. Inspectors observed one staff member talking to a parent whilst completing some paperwork, not looking at her for most of the conversation. The staff member provided only very minimal information about the child's day and did not give the parent her full attention.

Other staff were seen to be more friendly and approachable. We saw most staff to be caring and kind in their interactions with children. However, some staff lacked motivation and were not seen to be warm, enthusiastic or engaging. These inconsistencies in staff engagement led to variable outcomes for children. For example, inspectors initially noted some improvement to the quality of care of the under two's, with an experienced worker from another Little Einstein's service and a highly motivated modern apprentice engaging warmly with the children. However, this quality of care was not maintained throughout the inspection as staffing in the room changed. There was considerable staff movement to cover breaks and meet ratios, ensuring that there were always qualified staff in individual rooms. This added to the lack of consistency for children and we found that the presence of qualified staff did not always improve the quality of children's experiences. Although pockets of good practice were observed, we did not hear and see enough language, laughter, support, affection and fun with the children.

We saw children being cuddled, encouraged and comforted at times but overall we found there to be a lack of nurture in the care of the under three's and a poor understanding of their needs. This lack of warmth and nurture from some staff needed to be urgently addressed (see improvement notice issued to the service dated 01.06.2017, which can be found under the nursery name on the Care Inspectorate's website www.careinspectorate.com). There was little evidence that key frameworks like 'Pre-Birth to Three' were understood or used to inform planning for this age group. The room layouts and lack of comfortable seating was not conducive to children enjoying close individual time with staff, for example sitting on staff laps for a cuddle, story or being given a bottle (see areas for improvement under the environment and staffing themes in this report and requirements within the improvement notice).

We heard some praise and encouraging staff language that was respectful and boosted children's confidence and self-esteem. However, some staff were not skilled in engaging with children, they did not use observation and cues from children effectively to support their play and learning. There was a lack of rich language, discussion, use of open-ended and challenging questions to extend children's thinking and understanding. For example, the children in the pre-school room were inquisitive about the new fruit that was served at snack time (pomegranate). Staff did not appear to know what the fruit was, did not take the opportunity to instigate discussion with the children and there was no opportunity to research the fruit through books or using the internet.

Another example was the absence of conversation with children during an observed snack in the room for two-three year old children. The staff member focused on preparing food and cleaning, she barely spoke to the children, did not smile and made little eye contact. She could have used this time to talk with the children, to extend and encourage their language and to support them to participate in a positive shared meal experience (see requirement within the improvement notice and recommendation one).

There were limited opportunities for children to make choices as the quality of resources and range of activities were poor. Planning did not take sufficient account of national guidance and good practice guidelines. There was a lack of leadership and direction in all rooms which resulted in some restless and boisterous behaviours at times, particularly in the pre-school room. Inspectors found this room to be poorly supervised and whilst staff were working with a small group of children they were not always aware of the needs of other children in the group. Both inspectors witnessed children either being hit or upset by other children within poorly supervised and slightly chaotic periods. Whilst noting that core staff were absent during this inspection, the quality of experience was found to be weak for children in the pre-school room during this inspection (see requirements within the improvement notice and recommendations under staffing theme).

There was a lack of routine consultation with children. We did not see their views, ideas and comments widely sought, displayed or used to inform the planning process. A more child led and responsive approach to planning needed to be developed and supported through improved access to resources, improved monitoring of the service and a more effective programme of staff development. Children needed to be provided with much broader opportunities and to be supported by skilled, knowledgeable and motivated staff (see improvement notice and recommendations).

Children in all rooms had some opportunities to be independent, we saw very young children confidently feeding themselves and requiring minimal assistance from staff. The observed lunchtime for older children needed further review, it took far too long and was seen to be disorganised and chaotic at times. Staff were seen to pour drinks for pre-school children at snack time and set the table; tasks that could easily have been carried out by the children. We suggested that staff revisit 'Setting the Table' good practice guidance to inform development of mealtimes to offer more sociable and enjoyable experiences for all children (see recommendation one).

Children had formed good friendships with peers, they were learning to share, take turns, work together and consider the needs of others. This was supporting them to be responsible and independent, although could have been better supported by a more skilled and experienced staff group.

Aspects of children's health were being supported through daily routines that included active play in the fresh air and a varied menu with emphasis on healthy eating. They also had access to fresh drinking water throughout the day.

Children's needs, experiences and progress were noted and tracked in individual profiles. We found these to be generally satisfactory but the quality of observations and recordings was variable. Staff needed to develop a more evaluative writing style, placing greater emphasis on children's significant learning and identifying and revisiting meaningful next steps. Some staff clearly needed additional training and support to develop skills and confidence in this area. Senior staff should extend their auditing to achieve greater consistency and quality. It was evident that the link between recording and delivering care that met children's needs should be strengthened, as it was not evident that recording of need was having any impact on children's experiences (see requirement within improvement notice and recommendation two).

Most staff had accessed child protection training but examination of an internal skills audit illustrated that some staff had only a very basic understanding of key issues and their responsibilities to protect children. Senior staff who had completed more in-depth training relevant to their roles as designated child protection officers had since left the service. We were concerned that there was a lack of experience, training and expertise in the key area of child protection. The service must ensure that relevant training is provided for all staff relevant to their role and area of responsibility to ensure that children are safe and protected (see requirement within the improvement notice).

Overall, we were disappointed by the poor quality of care and support. Children were generally happy and settled but were not always being appropriately supported to help them develop and reach their potential. Urgent review was needed to improve outcomes and opportunities for all age groups. It was disappointing to see that the numerous issues requiring improvement found at this inspection had all previously been highlighted at previous inspections (please see requirements in the improvement notice and unmet recommendations from the last inspection that are repeated in this report and require attention).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Lunchtime routines should be reviewed to offer children a more positive and sociable meal experience that promotes independence.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

2. Recording and planning for children should improve to better inform individual care needs, including review of profiles, personal plans and child welfare and child protection recording.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 4: Engaging with Children, Standard 5: Quality of Experience, Standard 11: Access to Resources and Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

Grade: 2 - weak

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The nursery premises were spacious and bright with ample natural light and ventilation throughout. All rooms were at ground floor level in this purpose-built nursery building making it accessible to all and easy to vacate in an emergency situation. There was easy access into the enclosed and secluded outdoor play spaces. The nursery was safe and secure, with the manager's office situated at the main entrance enabling staff to monitor who was coming into the nursery. This also ensured that the manager was readily available to parents and to greet families as they arrived.

Playrooms were arranged for children suited to their age and stage of development. There were some displays and photographs about the children's topics and experiences that helped them to feel included and valued in the nursery. There was ample space for children to play, eat, sleep and to be active inside and outside. However, further attention was needed to the organisation and furnishing of all rooms as there was a lack of soft and comfortable areas for children to relax, enjoy one-to-one attention and support, have some private space or quiet time. This was particularly evident in the room used for under two's, where there was no sofa or other form of comfortable seating. This was not conducive to supporting nurturing care nor was there suitable space for staff to sit with children on their laps to read stories, to cuddle and talk, to sing, to comfort them and give them their bottles of milk. Staff should consider reorganising the rooms for under twos to create a more relaxing and comfortable space to further promote nurturing care (see recommendation one).

We were disappointed to see that the quality and organisation of resources had not improved significantly since the last inspection, despite this issue being part of a requirement to urgently improve the learning environment. We gave the service clear guidance at the last inspection in November 2016 in relation to improving children's learning experiences. This included extending the range of good quality resources, discarding broken and damaged equipment, reorganising resources, supporting children to care for and respect resources and extending the range of natural and open-ended materials. We found that the quality of resources was still poor, whilst acknowledging that some new resources had been provided. However, they had not been well cared for and had made little impact on the overall quality of children's experiences.

Children of all ages, but particularly older children, were not being provided with sufficient and challenging resources to effectively support them to achieve and reach their potential. We examined play materials and found that there were broken and damaged resources throughout the nursery. Essential pieces of games and puzzles were missing rendering the activity frustrating and meaningless to children as they could not complete the activity or experience a sense of achievement. Resources in all rooms were poorly organised. There was too much emphasis on plastic play resources that had limited scope for learning. We reinforced the importance of introducing more natural and open-ended resources to promote opportunities for creativity, inquiry and curiosity (see requirement in the improvement notice).

The room for out of school care was seen to be in a dirty and disorganised condition. This room was dominated by large soft play apparatus that had been poorly maintained. Staff could not confirm when the apparatus had last been cleaned and we noted several areas of damage to the thick vinyl material that had not been repaired. This posed trip hazards and risk of illness and infection due to the poor hygiene standards in this shared facility that was used by most age groups. Floors in this room were seen in a dirty condition, carpets had clearly not been recently vacuumed, it was not known when they had last been thoroughly steam cleaned.

The vinyl floor surface was stained in areas and did not look clean. Floors throughout the nursery were seen in the same condition. The sink was stained and had some remnants of food in the plug hole that had not been cleared. There were no cleaning records to evidence when the room had last been cleaned. A dirty curtain that was seen hanging in the bathroom, used by this age group at the last inspection, had still not been removed. The previous manager had been asked to remove this potential infection control risk by inspectors in November 2016. We were advised that the cleaner had recently left employment at the nursery and had not yet been replaced. Cleaning tasks were currently being undertaken by care staff in addition to their other duties. We advised the manager and operations manager that standards of cleanliness were not acceptable or safe and must be immediately improved (the poor standard of cleanliness and poor infection control measures found at this inspection are the subject of a requirement in an improvement notice that has recently been issued by the Care Inspectorate).

We also found the room for out of school children to lack resources of relevance and interest to this older age group. There was a small broken car racing track that was not removed even after inspectors made staff aware that the controls were not working. There was a small art area, some dirty dolls and buggies and a range of incomplete resources that were not age appropriate and offered no challenge or interest. The room appeared uncared for, it was cluttered and disorganised.

The pre-school room was also poorly resourced. For example, there was a sand tray with such a thin layer of sand that it restricted children's play and learning, there were blunt and unsharpened pencils and no pencil sharpener, card games with numerous pieces missing, a very small wooden train track with very few trains that limited opportunity and scope for shared play, a home corner that was empty and was largely unused by the children, no opportunity to access ICT resources. We observed some children to be restless and bored, they moved around the room aimlessly and were not always focused at play (the issues around the poor quality and range of resources is also the focus of a requirement in the Improvement notice).

There was a poor approach to hand washing in the preschool room which posed potential risk to children's health and safety. There were no paper towels in their bathroom, children had to wash their hands and then collect a paper towel from a drawer in the main playroom. This was not teaching children good hand washing habits. Their bathroom was seen in a disorganised and unhygienic condition. Toilet roll dispensers were not in use, toilet rolls were placed on the top of toilet cisterns, one was seen strewn across the toilet floor. Toilets had not all been flushed, floors and sinks did not appear clean and fresh (see requirement in the improvement notice).

There was no record of when the ball pool in the baby room was last thoroughly cleaned. An inspector touched the wooden barrier to the ball pool and this was sticky to touch. There were two bathrooms in use for nappy changing for this age group. There was a strong and unpleasant smell coming from one of the bathrooms. Staff told us that they did not know what the smell was and we were not confident that this problem was being investigated and remedied.

One bathroom had adult hand washing facilities but not a low-level child-sized sink for hand washing. The other bathroom did not have an adult height sink for hand washing. As a result, hand washing was compromised during an observed nappy change. The inspector had to remind the staff member to wash the child's hands after the nappy change. The child had touched her nappy region during the nappy change and then proceeded to open and close bins whilst the staff member cleaned the changing mat. If the child's hands had not been washed there was risk to the health of all children in that room through potential cross contamination, including greater risk of common infections like diarrhoea through poor hand washing. Please refer to the document 'Keep it clean and healthy - Infection control guidance for nurseries, playgroups and other childcare settings'.

Some children under two were given bottles of milk directly from their bags that had not been refrigerated. It is not known how long the milk products had been left at room temperature but children could have potentially arrived at the service from 7am that morning. The milk was given at around 12.25pm. Safe practice guidance suggests that all milk is refrigerated and advises that any milk not used should be discarded after a maximum time of two hours since preparation to reduce risk of illness and infection.

A child was given a dummy before sleep time from a communal box found in a cupboard as the child's own dummy could not be found. The dummy was not cleaned before use and had not been kept in an individual box, so was not clean and hygienic for use. This unsatisfactory approach to infection control was most concerning and posed risk to these very young children's health. This breach to good infection control practice was carried out by a qualified member of staff who should be a good role model and mentor to the modern apprentices (these poor infection control practices are the subject of a requirement in the improvement notice and must be immediately improved to support children's health, safety and wellbeing).

The service should continue to develop their approach to risk assessment ensuring that children are more actively involved in managing risk. Staff should also ensure that key health and safety issues raised in this inspection report are considered when reviewing risk within the service (see recommendation two).

All children were seen to have some opportunity to play outside in the fresh air during this inspection. We saw them enjoying their time outside and the active play was conducive to their health and wellbeing. However, there was still a lack of challenge and interest, particularly for older children. We had suggested at the last inspection that staff made use of current good practice guidance including 'My world outdoors' to support them to develop the outdoor space and experiences for children. Some tyres and some wooden sleepers had been provided but this added little to children's experiences as the sleepers were far too heavy to move and use creatively. The fixed climbing apparatus and some other resources offered little challenge to older children. We discussed how 'loose parts' and a more creative and imaginative approach to outside learning could be introduced to offer children greater opportunity to explore, problem solve and investigate (see recommendation three).

Nursery rhyme music was centrally streamed into all rooms on the day of this inspection. This was repetitive and distracting for children at play. We suggested that this practice ceased so that a more focused and spontaneous approach to music and singing could be supported.

Maintenance issues in the building had not been promptly dealt with and a more responsive system should be introduced to ensure a healthy and safe environment for children. For example, we saw that tarmac was lifting on the outside play surface and posed a trip hazard, a children's toilet was not working and repairs were required to the soft play apparatus.

In conclusion, urgent improvement must be made to the nursery environment. Requirements regarding this can be found in the improvement notice including:

- The nursery must be deep cleaned with routine cleaning systems established to maintain hygienic and safe standards
- Consistent safe infection control practice must be assured to reduce risk of illness and infection to children
- The range and quality of resources must be improved to offer children challenge and to support them to achieve and reach potential and broken and damaged resources must be removed.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 3

1. All play rooms should be reorganised and furnished to offer children more comfortable areas to relax, enjoy private space and quiet time.

National Care standards : Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 2: A Safe Environment and Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

2. The service should develop their approach to risk assessment to increase safety and involve children more in risk management.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 2: A Safe Environment and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.

3. The outside play space should be further developed to offer children greater challenge and opportunity.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Children up to the age of 16, Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 11: Access to Resources.

Grade: 1 - unsatisfactory

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

From our inspection findings we evaluated this theme as weak.

We observed some good teamwork and saw staff helping each other and moving rooms to meet the demands of the service. However this led to inconsistent and variable standards of care at times with staff not always having good knowledge of the children in their care. We saw some staff using kind, encouraging and supportive language with the children which boosted their self-esteem and confidence. Some staff were cheerful and approachable and told us that they liked working at the nursery, others were less enthusiastic and some lacked warmth and interest in their work. It was noted that some staff were clearly nervous with the inspection taking place and lacked some confidence in sharing their practice with the inspectors.

We observed some positive, responsive and caring staff interactions with children. However, overall the quality of staff engagement was poor and at a very basic level that was not supporting children to thrive and reach their potential. There was a lack of language used by staff to support children's learning and language development and they were not using observation and their skills effectively to extend children's experiences. There appeared to be a lack of skill and understanding of children's needs within the team; this needed to be urgently addressed through staff recruitment and staff development programmes (see requirement within the improvement notice and recommendations one, two, three and four).

Staff had received regular training in key topics, including child protection and first aid. Observation of practice and examination of training audits indicated that training was not always being transferred effectively to practice. There were displays throughout the nursery about current childcare frameworks, including Curriculum for Excellence, Pre-Birth to Three and GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) but little evidence in practice that staff understood and implemented their key principles. Staff needed to revisit and deepen their understanding of key national frameworks to embed a more responsive and nurturing ethos throughout the nursery. The service needed to better evaluate the effectiveness of training within its staff development programme (see recommendations two and three).

The manager had introduced staff appraisals and individual staff supervision sessions to further support staff development and identify any individual training and support needs. It was too early to comment on how effective these measures would be in improving standards of care, but examination of recordings found that the poor standards of staff practice seen at this inspection had not yet been robustly addressed.

Staff had good opportunities to express their views and to contribute to the development of the service through regular team meetings and the appraisal system. There was a lack of pride, shared vision and clear ethos for the service. Many staff had trained within the nursery and had little experience of other childcare settings and limited experiences of good practice. The staff development programme may benefit from staff making visits to other childcare services to experience good practice and bring fresh ideas into the service. Better use could also be made of team meetings and internal training to develop the team and establish more consistent standards. Greater use of self assessment and introducing opportunities for staff to reflect on their work may also help staff develop skills and extend insight into children's needs and their role in supporting children (see recommendations two and three).

Suitably robust recruitment procedures were in place, reflecting safe recruitment practices. Staff were registered with the SSSC within given timescales, but staff did need to revisit the SSSC codes of practice to reaffirm their understanding of their responsibilities as care workers. All staff were either appropriately qualified or were working towards a recognised qualification.

There was a modern apprenticeship scheme in place that had impacted on the level of experience and knowledge in the team. There were too few strong role models in the team to effectively mentor the apprentices and less experienced staff members.

Considerable improvement is needed to the quality of care and support for children of all ages. The service needs to build a skilled, experienced and knowledgeable staff group to help move the nursery forward and deliver improvement. There is little capacity to support trainees in this service until the practice of qualified staff is further developed and the quality of care is improved. The provider and management team need to develop a strategy for staff recruitment and staff development that ensures that staff in the service are suitably skilled and knowledgeable to deliver the improvement required (see recommendation one, two, three and four and requirement within the improvement notice).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 4

1. The service should develop a robust written induction programme, which allows staff to record their progress during induction periods. In doing so, the managers will be able to assess and evaluate performance offering additional guidance for staff timely.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standards 12: Confidence in staff, Standards 13: Improving the Service and Standards 14: Well-Managed Service.

2. Staff training, development and support should be extended to improve the quality of children's experiences and enhance outcomes.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

3. Staff should develop greater awareness of and implement key childcare frameworks like Building the Ambition, Pre-Birth to Three and GIRFEC to support practice development and improve outcomes for children.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing, Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

4. Staff recruitment policy and procedure should ensure that suitably qualified, skilled, competent and motivated staff are employed and deliver care that is responsive, nurturing and improves children's experiences.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing, Standard 5: Quality of Experience, Standard 12: Confidence in Staff and Standard 13: Improving the Service.

Grade: 2 - weak

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The manager and depute manager in post at the last inspection had both recently left the service. A new manager had been appointed and had only been in post for a few weeks at the time of this inspection. She was still getting to know the service and was identifying priorities for improvement. She was being well supported by the more experienced operations manager, who was currently spending a large part of her time in this service to lead and support improvement. Both recognised the huge task required to improve the service as highlighted at the last inspection, where two requirements and eight recommendations were made. Since completing the inspection visit and writing this inspection report, the new manager has resigned from the post, which is currently being advertised more broadly to attract experienced candidates for the role. An interim management structure has been put in place until this key post is filled using the skills and experience from other managers in this nursery chain.

Our observations and findings from this inspection concluded that there had been very minimal progress in improving the nursery since the last inspection in November 2016. Some aspects of the service had deteriorated further, notably the cleanliness of the premises. The requirements and all recommendations made at the last inspection had not yet been met, whilst we recognised that current staff and managers were starting to address these issues. In light of the poor response to improvement, we are no longer confident that improvement will take place without further regulatory intervention from the Care Inspectorate. We have now issued the service with an improvement notice detailing the improvements that must be made within given timescales.

The service had lacked strong and effective leadership for some time with standards gradually declining. Poor staff practice had developed that had gone largely unchallenged. We felt that a negative culture had developed that had lost sight of the priorities for children. Routines and practices appeared to be driven by the needs and preferences of staff with insufficient regard for consistency of care for children.

Only one staff member expressed concern about the poor cleanliness, and poor condition and range of resources. These poor standards appeared to have become acceptable throughout the team. Systems were being introduced to monitor the service and support staff practice but these had not yet been effective in instigating change.

Suggestions made at the last inspection regarding extending use of self-assessment and making use of the quality audit tool 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' had not been implemented. Further discussion about monitoring the service took place during this inspection, reinforcing the importance of placing greater emphasis on outcomes for children with a view to promoting quality and adding depth and breadth to children's experiences and learning opportunities.

The operations manager was confident, experienced and keen to work closely with the Care Inspectorate to deliver the change required to improve children's experiences. Further visits will be made to the service to assess if improvements have been made to a satisfactory standard within the given timescales. The operations manager has kept in contact with the inspector to update actions and the proposed plans for meeting these targets.

The nursery needed to have a strong, experienced and competent leadership to direct the significant change and improvement needed in the service. The poor standards of staff practice that had developed needed to be urgently addressed through effective monitoring systems and staff development processes (see recommendation one and requirement within the improvement notice).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The service should ensure strong and effective leadership and robust quality assurance systems that deliver improvement and better outcomes for children.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 13: Improving the Service and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.

Grade: 2 - weak

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

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must ensure that all staff adhere to best practice guidance and promote a culture where all children are respected and included in the setting. In order to achieve this, the provider must:

- a) Identify and record staff training and developmental needs
- b) Plan and implement suitable training such as infection control, behaviour management, GIRFEC and Curriculum for Excellence to ensure all staff have a sound understanding of best practice
- c) Carry out observations of staff practice to ensure the children are safe and their wellbeing is promoted
- d) Support staff to share best practice and raise any concerns about how children's needs are met
- e) Promote a positive culture whereby all the children are respected and included.

This is in order to comply with regulation 4 (1) (a) (d) and 5 (2) (a) (b) (i) (ii) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI/210). The Care Inspectorate. (2014) Best practice guidance: managing choking episodes in babies and children. HCR-0414-805.

Timescale - d and e with immediate effect, a within three weeks from receipt of this report and b and c within 4 months from receipt of this report.

This requirement was made on 15 September 2015.

Action taken on previous requirement

We did not find that this requirement was met and issues regarding staff practice and poor experiences for children have been highlighted again in this inspection report. A further requirement relating to these issues is included within an improvement notice recently issued to the service.

Not met

Requirement 2

The quality of care and support must be improved to provide children with nurturing and responsive care and experiences that supports them to achieve and reach their potential.

This is to comply with SSI 2011/210 4 Welfare of users 4.(1) A provider must; (a) make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users;

The timescale for this to be implemented is by Friday 31 March 2017.

This requirement was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

We did not find that this requirement had been met and issues regarding staff practice and poor experiences for children have been highlighted again in this inspection report. A further requirement relating to these issues is included within an improvement notice recently issued to the service.

Not met

Requirement 3

All playrooms must be reorganised to improve the learning environment and level of comfort. The range, quality and organisation of resources must be improved to support children to achieve and reach their potential.

This is to comply with SSI 2011/210 4 Welfare of users Welfare of users 4.(1) A provider must; (a) make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users;

Timescale for implementation is by Friday 31 March 2017.

This requirement was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

We did not find that this requirement had been met. Issues relating to the poor standard of the environment and resources that led to poor experiences for children have been highlighted again in this inspection report. A further requirement relating to these issues is included within an improvement notice recently issued to the service.

Not met

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The staff should develop their knowledge of infant nutrition and weaning. The manager should provide any additional guidance for staff to ensure children are supported safely and meals and snacks are served appropriately.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standards 2: A Safe Environment, Standards 3: Health and Wellbeing, Standards 5: Quality of Experience and Standards 12: Confidence in Staff.

This recommendation was made on 15 September 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation was partly met, a further recommendation is made about mealtimes in this report.

Recommendation 2

The staff should develop how they record the children's learning, making next steps for learning and individual achievements visible for parents to read and comment on. National frameworks should be used to support staff to record the children's learning effectively.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standards 4: Engaging with Children and Standards 13: Improving the Service.

This recommendation was made on 15 September 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This had not been fully met, a further related recommendation is made in this report.

Recommendation 3

The providers should develop a robust written induction programme, which allows staff to record their progress during induction periods. In doing so, the managers will be able to assess and evaluate performance offering additional guidance for staff timely.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standards 12: Confidence in Staff, Standards 13: Improving the Service and Standards 14: Well-Managed Service.

This recommendation was made on 15 September 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The induction process had been developed but still needed to be improved as part of the staff development programme.

Recommendation 4

The staff should record their own learning and development in a way, which demonstrates how they have improved their own knowledge and skills and outcomes for children.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standards 12: Confidence in Staff, Standards 13: Improving the Service and Standards 14: Well-Managed Service.

This recommendation was made on 15 September 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

There was still little evidence to see that training had improved practice and outcomes for children. A further recommendation is made in this report relating to staff development and is related to requirements within the Improvement notice.

Recommendation 5

The provider and the manager should develop an effective system to evaluate staff practice and performance.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standards 1: Improving the Service, Standards 3: Health and Wellbeing, Standards 2: A Safe Environment and Standards 12: Confidence in Staff.

This recommendation was made on 15 September 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation had not been fully met, a further recommendation is made in this report in relation to staff development and monitoring of practice.

Recommendation 6

Lunchtime routines should be reviewed to offer children a more positive and sociable meal experience that takes greater account of their individual needs.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Further attention is needed to develop mealtimes throughout the nursery. A further recommendation is made in this report.

Recommendation 7

Recording and planning for children should improve to better inform individual care needs, including review of profiles, personal plans and child welfare and child protection recording.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 4: Engaging with Children, Standard 5: Quality of Experience, Standard 11: Access to Resources and Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This had not been met, a further related recommendation is made in this report.

Recommendation 8

The service should develop their approach to risk assessment to increase safety and involve children more in risk management.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 2: A Safe Environment and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

There were some developments to risk assessment within the service, but further attention is still needed to involve children more in risk management.

Recommendation 9

The outside play space should be further developed to offer children greater challenge and opportunity.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 11: Access to Resources.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This has not been met, a further recommendation is made in this report.

Recommendation 10

All playrooms should be presented in a clean, hygienic and well-cared for condition to support children's health, safety and well-being.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 2: A Safe Environment, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing and Standard 5: Quality of Experience.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This had still not been met. We found standards to be poor and a requirement has been made relating to improving the environment in an Improvement notice issued to the service.

Recommendation 11

Staff training, development and support should be extended to improve the quality of children's experiences and enhance outcomes.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation had not been met, a further recommendation is made in this report in relation to staff development.

Recommendation 12

Staff practice needed to take much greater account of key frameworks and national guidance to improve practice and outcomes for children.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation has not been met, a recommendation relating to this is repeated in this inspection report.

Recommendation 13

The service should continue to develop effective quality assurance systems that deliver improvement and better outcomes for children.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 13: Improving the Service and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.

This recommendation was made on 20 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The Operations manager had started the process to monitor the nursery and develop the improvement agenda. It was too early to see how effective new systems will be in improving the service. A further recommendation relating to improving the service is included in this report.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Enforcement

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

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
30 Nov 2016	Unannounced	Care and support	2 - Weak
		Environment	2 - Weak
		Staffing	2 - Weak
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak
14 Jul 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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