

Alford Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Greystone Road
Alford
AB33 8TY

Telephone: 019755 62395

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 1 February 2018

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Care service number:
CS2003015703

About the service

Alford School Nursery has been registered since 2002. It is registered as a Day Care of Children service to provide care to a maximum of 30 children from the age of three years up to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is accommodated within Alford Community Campus, a new facility built to house the secondary school, primary and nursery children with shared community amenities such as a swimming pool. The campus is located on the outskirts of Alford and is surrounded by an expansive wooded area. The nursery is situated on the ground floor and the children have direct access to the nursery garden from the playroom.

Aims of the service include being committed to "help children become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors".

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). This is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

What people told us

We observed children at play within the nursery environment. Children appeared happy, settled and busy as they played indoors and out.

We spoke with eight children during our inspection. Their comments included:

"We put plastic bottles in the recycling."

"My baby's cold because she's not well."

"My baby's got a pink bottle and blanket."

We sent out 20 Care Standards Questionnaires. Fourteen parents completed and returned these to us. When asked about the overall quality of care their child received at the nursery, 13 parents indicated they were very satisfied, and one indicated they were satisfied.

We spoke with two parents, both of whom were very happy with the service and the quality of care their child received.

Comments from parents included:

"My husband and I are delighted we decided to chose Alford School Nursery for our son. My son feels safe at the nursery and my husband and I feel all his needs are fulfilled."

"My child is happy and stimulated at nursery. He enjoys it and the teachers are all friendly and approachable. Reporting of what my child gets up to at nursery could be more frequent (I appreciate this may be time-consuming) but at 3.5 the answer to what he is up to is playing and what he had for snack!"

"My daughter has settled in quickly and I am sure that is largely to do with the staff being so approachable and welcoming. She loves going to the school nursery."

"I feel the children would benefit from visitors i.e. police - stranger danger. Also more interaction with the community."

"My child is always happy and keen to go to nursery."

"The staff are welcoming every morning and at pick up time. My child is always wanting to go to nursery to see Mrs Gibb/Miss McLean. I know he is very happy as he always talks about the activities and they have really helped him. This nursery has been the best thing for him."

"Very happy."

"Wide range of activities."

"Healthy snacks - fruit daily and milk."

"Loves it - can't wait to get here!"

"They pick and choose what they want to do."

"Kept well up to date."

"They are allowed to dictate when they need outdoors."

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at the service's improvement plan and this reflected the necessary improvements identified to impact positively on children's learning, development and experiences. Evidence confirmed the improvements were underway. The plan should include target dates along with dates when improvements are achieved.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children and staff shared warm, affectionate and caring relationships. Children were familiar and comfortable within their setting and moved around freely. Children readily and confidently approached staff; their sensitive interactions and calming natures settled children well within the nursery.

"My daughter has settled in quickly and I am sure that is largely to do with the staff being so approachable and welcoming. She loves going to the school nursery." (Parent comment)

Children's independence and responsibility was encouraged; children received regular praise from staff for their achievements.

Personal plans were in place for all children attending. Information highlighted children's individual care and support needs. We found however, information such as GP and health visitor details needed to be included in the plans. Staff involved parents in the review of these plans six-monthly if not before, in line with legislation. Children and their parents completed 'All About Me' forms to enable staff to ease children's transition from home to nursery.

Overall, staff knew the children they cared for very well; their personalities and traits. However, the systems for recording and evaluating children's progress, didn't always demonstrate clearly enough when progress was made. Furthermore, evaluation of learning didn't focus enough on significant areas of learning to plan for individual children's next steps. **See recommendation 1.**

Children's allergies were known to most staff and were supported in a sensitive and respectful manner. Some staff would benefit from refreshing their knowledge of individual children's health and wellbeing information.

A system for the management of medication was in place but needed to be reviewed and updated. Medication consent forms should include information such as the time medication was last administered prior to attending nursery and the procedure to follow should the child refuse or spit out medication. Medical care plans also needed to include triggers, symptoms and procedures to follow in the event medicines were not effective. This would contribute to keeping children safe and well.

Staff had a good understanding of how to protect children from the risk of harm, abuse and neglect and the reporting procedures. Staff attended training annually. Chronologies were in place for most children attending the service to record any significant event arising. However, staff should ensure appropriate information is always recorded in children's chronologies and not other records, as this provides an accurate timeline of events.

Children had daily access to outdoor play with lots of opportunities to run around and exercise. Snack was a sociable experience and provided opportunities for counting and number recognition. Staff sat with the children as they prepared snack. Children were responsible for tidying away their snack dishes. Overall menu choices were healthy; the daily menu was displayed for parents' information. Children's choices were sought and taken account of during menu planning. Children brushed their teeth under supervision and were well acquainted with the routine.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. To support children achieve, management and staff should continue to develop children's profiles to effectively record children's development and progress.

They should be able to demonstrate:

- evidence of progress in all aspects of children's development
- identify children's next steps for learning
- children's and parents' input into learning plans.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 4: Engaging with Children and Standard 5: Quality of Experience

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Children's welcoming, safe and enclosed environment provided them bright and spacious areas to play and learn.

The cloakroom area displayed a wealth of information for parents to read at their leisure. Lovely examples of children's artwork and emerging writing skills provided a colourful and interesting environment, celebrating children's achievement.

Children were included in the wider school, attending weekly music sessions to explore sounds, rhythm and movement.

Children enjoyed a wide variety of experiences including loose parts, sand and role play. They enjoyed making individual artistic creations from the variety of craft resources available. Children were fascinated by the water beads, prompting counting opportunities to ensure they all received one.

"Wide range of activities." (Parent comment)

Children were well supervised and supported by staff.

Further learning experiences enabled children to explore and discuss shape, number, rhyme, size and language. Review and monitoring the effectiveness of the room layout and resources would contribute to improving children's learning experiences, such as providing real life objects in the home corner.

Children shared their learning with us and the wider school at assembly. They told us about plastic being bad for the environment and the importance of putting plastic in the bin, "or fish get bottles in their tummy and die".

Parents were encouraged to take advantage of stay and play sessions; sharing a particular skill or participating in activities such as story-telling. This allowed parents to share in their child's nursery experiences.

The outdoor area was identified by the service as an area in need of improvement. Children, staff and parents had been consulted and put forward their ideas to improve the area and children's experiences.

Children benefitted from direct access to the outdoors offering free-flow play, with plentiful opportunities to experience active, energetic play. Children ran, chased and rode bikes, hula-hooped and played tennis. Children were also actively involved in risk assessing the outdoor play environment and trips further afield which raised their awareness of keeping themselves safe. Staff were familiar with and were using 'My World Outdoors' to enhance children's outdoor learning experiences.

Children self-registered on their arrival taking their snack card and signing the register. However there was no paper register to formally record the number of children present, time of arrival or authorised persons to collect children. This posed a risk in the event of an emergency, such as fire evacuation.

Overall infection control practices were in line with best practice. We did highlight however the need to remind children to wet their hands before using soap, limit the use of antibacterial soap and remove the lid from the waste paper bin. This good practice will limit the spread of infection.

Accidents and incidents were recorded with the type of first aid administered recorded. Effective monitoring would ensure that any inconsistencies, such as missing parent/first aider signatures were detected. This system would also highlight any areas identified as posing a risk to the health and wellbeing of the children.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Nursery staff were enthusiastic in their practice and held childcare qualifications suited to their roles. All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

"Everybody works really hard to look after our kids." (Parent comment)

The lead practitioner felt supported and more confident as she gained more autonomy within her role. The development of team discussion had led to identifying a number of areas for improvement, such as using phonics to develop literacy and numeracy within the nursery.

Staff had attended a variety of training opportunities such as, observation and assessment, letters and sounds and first aid, since the last inspection. They ably described how they felt training had improved their practice and further supported the children in their care. Staff kept training records and evaluations and these were quality

assured by management. Staff should ensure they consider and record the impact and outcome of new knowledge in relation to children's care, support and learning.

Staff were making good progress in their understanding of evaluation and were in the initial stages of implementing this into their practice. Staff were supported by the lead practitioner and manager. Staff described how they used their skills and experience to support children attending the service and should continue to build on this practice.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 – good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The head teacher had recently taken up position as manager for the nursery. Her appointment had made a positive impact on the service.

Staff told us they felt well supported by the lead practitioner and the manager. The lead practitioner had attended training in leadership to support her in her role.

The service was conscious of involving children and families in the ongoing development within the service. Parents told us they were encouraged to contribute to the life of the nursery. They also said they would welcome more opportunities for daily feedback.

"Communication could improve." (Parent comment)

At this inspection we found that management had progressed with the monitoring of staff practice and supported the improvement of the quality of children's experiences in the playroom. Management planned to coach and support staff to achieve the identified next steps to help secure better outcomes for children.

The nursery improvement plan reflected the necessary improvements identified to impact positively on children's learning, development and experiences. Evidence confirmed the improvements were underway. The plan should include target dates along with dates when improvements are achieved.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 – good

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

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

To support the individual needs of the child and help children achieve, care plans should fully record children's progress.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing and Standard 6: Support and Development

This recommendation was made on 9 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Care plans were in place for those children requiring additional support to meet their care and developmental needs. Information recorded included the actions taken along with the next steps to secure progress and targeted support for children. This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 2

To support the welfare of the child and help keep them safe, chronologies should be used effectively to record and monitor events which may have a significant effect on the child's life.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing and Standard 6: Support and Development

This recommendation was made on 9 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Chronologies were in place for most children attending the service to record any significant event arising. However, staff should ensure appropriate information is always recorded in children's chronologies and no other records, as this provides an accurate timeline of events. Overall this recommendation has been met; however will be referenced within the body of the report.

Recommendation 3

To support children achieve, management and staff should continue to develop the electronic learning diaries to effectively record children's development and progress. They should be able to demonstrate:

- evidence of progress in all aspects of children's development
- identify children's next steps for learning
- children's and parents' input into learning plans.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Standard 4: Engaging with Children and Standard 5: Quality of Experience

This recommendation was made on 9 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Electronic diaries were used to record and then print out children's development and progress for staff information and action.

- a) Staff were progressing well, recording children's next steps regularly. However children's profiles needed to be more focused and personalised to progress all aspects of children's development.
- b) Some clear next steps were being identified however needed to be more focused and measurable.
- c) Staff were in the initial stages of involving children in their learning plans. The Education Scotland inspector shared useful guidance as to how to progress, evidencing and evaluating what children had learned. Parents had been consulted about the frequency of sharing profiles. They opted for termly reviews although they could look at their children's profiles whenever they wished; they could also take them home to look at. Space was available for them make comment regards any input into their child's learning if they wished. This recommendation has not been met and will be restated.

Recommendation 4

To fully engage children and extend their thinking and learning, resources and activities should be challenging, child-led and include more opportunities for open-ended play.

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 9 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We observed:

- opportunities for children to experience open-ended play
- group activity that led to rhyming, shape/number/letter recognition
- indoor learning taken outdoors.

Improvements had been made with further areas of development identified for children and staff to explore. Improvements had been identified as a result of evaluation and these were included in the nursery improvement plan.

The 'Big Book' had been introduced to record and explore children's ideas. The next step is to provide for individual children's more in-depth learning and development.

Management and staff are progressing this in a positive direction. This recommendation has been met and is ongoing.

Recommendation 5

To support the health and wellbeing of the children and help them achieve, outdoor learning activities should be further developed to fully support creativity, enquiry and physical development.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing and Standard 5: Quality of Experience

This recommendation was made on 9 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Children had daily access to the outdoors with plentiful opportunities to experience active, energetic play; children ran, chased and rode bikes, hula-hooped and played tennis.

We observed two children making up and following rules for a ball game. Children had taken their learning from a group session indoors, to the outdoors, making a clock face from loose parts.

An outdoor play consultation with children, staff and their families identified improvements and suggestions to take forward in the near future, to provide children with more outdoor learning experiences. This recommendation has been met and is ongoing.

Recommendation 6

To support improvement to the service and improve outcomes for children, management should continue to ensure staff are included in evaluation of the service and encourage staff to take responsibility for development of areas relevant to their skills and experiences.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 13: Improving the Service

This recommendation was made on 9 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Staff were making good progress in their understanding of evaluation and were implementing this into their daily practice with support provided by the lead practitioner and Head Teacher. Staff described how they used their skills and experience to support children attending the service and should continue to build on and embed this into practice. This recommendation has been met and is ongoing.

Recommendation 7

To support staff and help make improvements to the service, the manager should ensure quality assurance systems are fully embedded in practice. Management should be able to demonstrate:

- a) staff monitoring and playroom observations are reintroduced
- b) staff training records with evaluations of the impact on practice are kept
- c) all staff are involved in self-evaluation
- d) the improvement plan is based on self-evaluation, regularly updated and used effectively to support development of 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

This recommendation was made on 9 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

- a) Management had progressed with the monitoring of staff practice and supported the improvement of the quality of children's experiences in the playroom. Management planned to coach and support staff to achieve the identified next steps to help secure better outcomes for children.
- b) Staff had attended a variety of training opportunities since the last inspection. They ably described how they felt training had improved their practice and further supported the children in their care. Staff kept training records and evaluations and these were quality assured by management. Staff should ensure they link the impact and outcomes of their learning to the quality of their practice and experiences of children.
- c) Staff were making good progress in their understanding of evaluation and were implementing this into their daily practice with support provided by the lead practitioner and head teacher. Staff described how they used their skills and experience to support children attending the service and should continue to build on and embed this into practice.
- d) The nursery improvement plan reflected the necessary improvements identified to impact positively on children's learning, development and experiences. Evidence confirmed the improvements were underway. The plan should include target dates along with dates when improvements are achieved.

Management should continue with this positive progress. Overall, this recommendation has been met and is ongoing. Further information can be read within the body of the report.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

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

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
18 Jan 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
25 Sep 2015	Announced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak
15 Feb 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
2 Dec 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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