

Care service inspection report

Brora Playgroup

Day Care of Children

Brora Primary School
Johnstone Place
Brora
KW9 6PF

Inspected by: Marion Sutherland

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 9 May 2013



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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Service provided by:

CALA Direct Management Services

Service provider number:

SP2010011106

Care service number:

CS2010271599

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Summary

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

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

We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support	5	Very Good
Quality of Environment	5	Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	5	Very Good

What the service does well

Brora Playgroup provides a wide range of interesting and imaginative activities for the children. Children have choice and influence over the activities. The children are able to take part in gardening and outside play on a regular basis. The playgroup gave parents the opportunity to be involved with the group.

What the service could do better

The playgroup is continuing to build on opportunities for outside play and gardening with plans for planting and a science centre outside.

What the service has done since the last inspection

The service has continued to improve its links with parents. They are also building up children's learning journey folders and involving children in setting their own targets.

Conclusion

The playgroup is valued by parents who felt the staff were approachable and their children were happy to attend. The children enjoyed the routines and the opportunities for physical play, both in the hall and outside in the play park. The staff and children were enthusiastic in their approach to learning. The group helped children to move from home into the playgroup and then into nursery.

Who did this inspection

Marion Sutherland

1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information in relation to all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

Brora Playgroup was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 01 April 2011. They are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children aged from 2 years 6 months to those not yet attending primary school. The roll at the time of the inspection was 16, and 14 children attended on the day of the inspection.

The playgroup is a pre-school partner centre and is operated by Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) Direct Management Services. The service is managed by a peripatetic manager and is part of a cluster group. A senior play worker and assistant play worker run the service on a daily basis with weekly management input.

The playgroup operates term time only and is open five morning sessions each week.

Brora Playgroup is located within the school premises of Brora Primary School in the village of Brora, Sutherland. The premises consist of a dedicated play room, nearby shared toilet facilities and soft play area. The playgroup also has regular use of the school gym and outdoor play park for energetic play. There is also a growing area which is used by the playgroup and the school garden group.

Brora Playgroup aims to:

- 'Work towards a provision which encourages every child to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and involved.
- They promote the values, purposes and principles of A Curriculum for Excellence, enabling all children to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- Provide a high level of childcare using the National Care Standards and the Child at the Centre 2 as guidelines for implementing new procedures and policies and to further improve the standard of care provided via monitoring and self-evaluation.
- Identify and provide relevant training for staff, including that required to meet the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements.
- Respect and involve parents in the care and education of their child.
- Encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their community and the environment.'

Requirements and recommendations

If we are concerned about some aspect of a service, or think it could do more to improve, we may make a recommendation or requirement.

- A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement. Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, relevant codes of practice and recognised good practice.
- A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 and Regulations or Orders made under the Act or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of Regulations, Orders or Conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are legally enforceable at the discretion of the Care Inspectorate.

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

Quality of Care and Support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Environment - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good

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

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 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

This report was written following an unannounced inspection which took place on 02 May 2013. The inspection was carried out by Inspector Marion Sutherland. Feedback was given at the end of the inspection to the staff and later to the manager by telephone.

We sent Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) to be issued to all parents/carers, on behalf of the Care Inspectorate and three were completed and returned.

As requested the manager sent us a self assessment form before the inspection.

During the inspection we gathered evidence from a number of sources including:

- Policies and procedures
- Aims and Objectives of the service
- Parents Information Folder
- Children's information
- Newsletters
- Noticeboards
- The self assessment
- Displays of children's work
- Discussion with the staff
- Observation of staff working with children
- Examination of the environment and resources
- Discussion with parents and children using the service
- Information from parents who completed Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) and the service questionnaires

All of these were taken into account in this report.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

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

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

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

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

Fire safety issues

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

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

No recommendations outstanding.

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 fully completed self assessment document from the provider. We were satisfied with the way the provider completed this and with the relevant information included for each statement that we grade services under.

The provider identified what they thought the service did well and some areas for development and any changes it had planned. They also gave information about how they involved feedback from children and parents/carers in reaching its assessments.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

The children were all seen to be happy and engaged with the activities which were available. They related well to staff and to the other children. They joined in enthusiastically with any group activities such as gym and discussed plans and ideas for future projects such as the science centre outside. They coped well with routines such as registration, where they took it in turns to take the lead and were keen to be snack helpers. They were seen to show concern and empathy for the other children in the group and to value friendships.

Taking carers' views into account

We talked informally with seven parents on the day of the inspection and all were very positive about the playgroup and their child's experience and activities when attending the group.

Parents comments included:

- 'It's great'.
- 'The staff are very approachable. There are outdoor toys and a shed, as wellies and suits so they can go outside without worrying about the weather'.
- 'There is good communication with staff'.
- 'Excellent. A good variety and staff ask for our views so it is easy to contribute'.
- 'Brilliant. Lots of information. Staff are very helpful'.
- 'My child is happy to go. There is lots of physical play'.

Three Care Standards Questionnaires were returned and they were very positive about the provision. The only negative was one parent who did not feel there was enough space for the children to play and get involved in a range of activities. All the parents felt that 'Overall, I am happy with the quality of care my child receives in this service'. They all agreed 'My child can experience and choose from a balanced range of activities' and 'I am kept informed about what is happening in the service, for example through newsletters and information boards'.

Responses from the service's own questionnaires rated it as 'very good' or 'excellent' and one parent said:

- 'My son loves playgroup. He wishes he could go 7 days a week'.

3 The inspection

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

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 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

We found the service gave children and their parents/carers very good opportunities to give their views and make suggestions about the care and support they received.

The playgroup had a parental involvement policy and a children's participation policy, which included both formal and informal methods for involving parents/carers in their child's care and support. A Parent Information Pack was provided to all parents/carers prior to children starting which emphasised the importance of partnership with parents. Parents were encouraged to be involved in fundraising, sharing a skill and helping on outings. They were also welcome to join in the open sessions on Friday and parents had been involved in helping with activities and fundraising. Parents meetings were held during playgroup time to allow parents to attend.

Effective settling in procedures were in place to support children coming into the group and moving on to nursery. Staff worked with parents to gather relevant information about children's needs prior to attending playgroup, to ensure quality and consistent care for children. 'Have Your Say' questionnaires had been issued to parents about the settling in procedures for playgroup, which were evaluated and the information used to make improvements.

Policies and procedures relevant to the care and support for children were available to parents in the waiting area. The noticeboards provided useful information for parents, including the activity plan and snack menu, other playgroup information and information about health issues, child protection and the local community. Photos of the recent activities and outings within the community were also displayed in the 'Big Book of Events' and the 'Look What We've Been Doing Folder' and on the walls. A

Flipchart was used to share information about the weekly theme and parents were encouraged to continue this theme at home with their child.

Parents were kept informed of their child's progress through informal discussions and parents were seen to exchange of information with staff at the end of the session. Parents were invited into the play room each Friday to look at their children's work and discuss their child's progress with staff. They were also invited to attend parents' meetings each term, to discuss their child's progress and there were opportunities to be involved in evaluating the service. Parents received a written 'Record of Achievement' of their child's progress in the summer. Parents were able to use the comments sheet attached to this to give feedback on the playgroup provision. Regular newsletters provided information about activities. Parents/carers were encouraged to participate in activities such as helping in playgroup, sharing skills and outings within the community.

Appropriate systems were in place for sharing information between staff, parents and the manager.

Playgroup staff consulted with children through together time and group discussions and their ideas formed the basis of future planning. Staff used mind maps, floor books and voting systems to record children's thoughts and ideas, as well as thumbs up/thumbs down. There were displays to encourage children's input such as the 'We are Learning About' display and 'What we would like to learn about' There were reading sheets to take home for a week and share with parents. The children had Personal Learning Journey folders to show examples of their work along with Stepping Stones forms to help the children begin to identify learning targets and assess and review their learning.

'Have Your Say' sheets and questionnaires were issued to parents, to provide an opportunity for them to comment on the quality of care provided. The group was gathering parent's email addresses to use this as another way of sharing information with parents.

Care Standards Questionnaire (CSQ) responses were very positive and parents who spoke to us during the inspection felt their children enjoyed attending playgroup.

The service had a Complaints Policy and information was available to children and parents/carers on the notice board and in the Information Pack.

Parental responses in the CSQs confirmed that 'The service has involved me and my child in developing the service, for example asking for ideas and feedback'.

Areas for improvement

The group was planning to use the 'Have Your Say' sheets to encourage further parental involvement.

Photographs of snack items and resources were to be used more as visual clues to help children make choices.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3

We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service strengths

We found this service was performing very well in meeting the health and wellbeing needs of the children. We concluded this after we spoke to the staff, saw written evidence and made observations at the nursery.

The playgroup was aware of the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and based their practice on ensuring that every child was safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and involved. The emotional and social development of the children was a priority, especially at times of change, such as starting playgroup and moving on into nursery. Parents and children had the chance to visit the playgroup before they started and parents were able to stay and support children as and when they needed to. Friendships between the children were seen to be encouraged, as was a caring approach to the needs and feelings of the other children.

The group had a child protection procedure and staff had child protection training which was updated regularly. If children were thought to require additional support then, after consultation with parents, staff were aware of which agencies they should contact. They had strong links with the health visitor who visited each term and who also had links with the families involved.

The playgroup had an appropriate Health and Safety policy and infection control guidelines, including recommended exclusion periods in order to prevent cross infection between the children. There were medication policies and medication was only administered following written parental instruction.

The children took part in the national tooth brushing scheme and there were visits by the dental hygienist to help children build up good tooth brushing routines.

Children were given many opportunities for physical exercise and helped to understand the importance of exercise, as it raised their heart beat and warmed them up in the gym hall. They had an outside play area with equipment and a playhouse, which parents had helped to fundraise for and build. Outing were also arranged to local areas such as the woods where the children had opportunities to explore their local environment.

Snacks were based on healthy eating principles, with milk or water to drink and fruit offered each day. Children were involved in preparing snack and were aware of the need to wash their hands before eating or preparing food. Snack was seen to be a very social time with the children and the staff sitting together and talking about the children's news and events in the playgroup.

The children were involved in making rules for the group and also in deciding on a child to be 'Star of the Week'. There was an 'It's Good to be Green' behaviour chart on the wall, which used the same behaviour reward system as the school. The children were seen to be aware of the playgroup rules and routines and they joined in with these enthusiastically.

Parental responses to the CSQs agreed 'The staff encourage my child to form positive relationships with other children' and 'The service has a clear code of behaviour for children, and works with the children to make sure they understand it.'

Areas for improvement

The playgroup was aware of the importance of continuing to liaise with other professionals to ensure the needs of the children were being met.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.

Service strengths

Parents had been involved in improvements to the outside play area and children were involved in making changes to the way areas were used within the playroom.

For evidence see Quality Theme 1, Quality Statement 1.

Areas for improvement

As above.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 2

We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected.

Service strengths

We found this service was performing very well in ensuring the environment was safe and the children were protected. We concluded this after we spoke to the staff, saw written evidence and made observations at the playgroup.

The playgroup room was within the school building and was seen to be well maintained, clean and warm with suitable child sized furniture and storage. There were accessible toilets, shared with the school, and staff accompanied any children who left the playroom. There was a secure entry system at the door and parents signed children in and out.

Children were able to use the school gym, as well as a soft play room. Children were aware of the safety rules for going through the school and up the stairs to the gym and were reminded of these by staff. Staff were able to contact school staff in case of emergency.

To help ensure that children had safe, healthy snacks the playroom had a dishwasher, as well as a fridge and microwave. Appropriate cleaning schedules were in place with a daily health and safety checklist. Staff were aware of the need for infection control and had information from the Food Standards Agency on 'Safer Food'. Staff had food hygiene training. Children were aware of the need to wash their hands and were supervised while they did this before snack.

There were maintenance and repair records kept for the building and resources, as well as accident and incident recording forms for the children. Termly cleaning schedules were kept for toys and equipment and toys and equipment were seen to be clean and well maintained.

There was a fenced in play area and garden in the school grounds which the children used on a regular basis. There were detailed risk assessments in place for activities and outings, which included the need for staff to carry out visual checks for safety before the children used any play areas. The children had outdoor clothing and boots to let them use the outside spaces throughout the year.

The children were helped to take responsibility for their environment through tidy up sessions and the playgroup was involved in achieving a Bronze eco award certification for schools.

In the CSQs parents agreed that 'The service is a safe, secure, hygienic, smoke free, pleasant and stimulating environment' and 'The service makes good use of resources in the community for example the library and parks'.

Areas for improvement

Daily checklists should be targeted and purposeful to show the daily responsibilities of the staff in ensuring that the room is clean and safe for the children.

Additional storage for staff paperwork and records would help to keep the playroom tidy and ensure paperwork is not encroaching on the kitchen and food preparation area.

Staff were both registered to undertake first aid training in June and until this happens the first aid notice in the playroom should be updated to show the First Aider who should be contacted.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service strengths

After considering the written evidence in the self assessment and information sharing, talking to staff and parents, this statement has been graded as very good.

See Quality Theme 1, Quality Statement 1.

Areas for improvement

As above.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3

We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service strengths

After considering the written evidence in the self assessment and training records, talking to staff and observing practice, this statement has been graded as very good.

There were policies and procedures in place through Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) Direct Management Services for safe recruitment and induction of staff. Staff were either Disclosure checked or members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme. Induction training included child protection as well as access to policies, and procedures, National Care Standards and SSSC Codes of Practice. Staff had appropriate qualifications and the manager and staff were either registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or were in the process of registering. CALA was able to provide suitable relief staff from its staff bank if permanent staff was absent.

Staff had annual appraisals which were used as the basis for assessing future training needs. Staff had weekly support and monitoring during the manager's visits, when they had opportunities to discuss practice and suitable training opportunities. There were regular supervision sessions when practice issues were discussed, as well as at the staff meetings.

In discussion and from observation it was evident that staff were motivated and professional in their approach. They were aware of National Care Standards and best practice and were keen to take up training opportunities when they became available through CALA or Highland Council. They discussed and reflected on their practice and introduced new ideas to try and meet the needs of the children.

The three parents who responded to the Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) agreed that 'I am confident that staff have the skills and experience to care for my child and support their learning and development'.

Areas for improvement

The playgroup had identified the benefit for using the Continuous Learning Framework as a tool for evaluating performance and staff development.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 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

See Quality Theme 1, Quality Statement 1.

Areas for improvement

As above.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 4

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

Service strengths

We found there was very good use of quality assurance systems and processes which involved children, parents/carers, stakeholders and staff in assessing the quality of the service provided.

The service used external and internal quality assurance systems to assess and review the quality of the service provided. The playgroup was a pre-school partner centre and received quality assurance visits from CALA and Highland Council.

Quality Indicators were used by the manager as part of the evaluation of playgroup plans, staff performance and auditing of input from staff, parents and other professionals. The manager and staff undertook self evaluation of the work of the playgroup using the National Care Standards and the Child at the Centre 2 documents. Questionnaires provided opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in the assessment of the quality of playgroup and suggestions were evaluated and ideas taken forward. Parents' views had been taken into account on how they wanted to be involved in the evaluation of Quality Indicators with staff and open sessions were held

each Friday if parents wanted to join in.

An improvement plan was compiled each year and this was shared with parents. There was a monitoring form for the improvement plan which the manager and staff used to ensure that the improvements took place throughout the year. Other professionals visited the playgroup and helped to provide information on good practice.

Staff attended regular staff meetings with the manager and their views were valued and actioned when possible. All staff were involved in making improvements within the playgroup and in reviewing the policies and procedures of the service. The current action plan emphasised the importance of supporting children to plan and reflect on their own learning and the use of assessment to track progress in learning and secure breadth, depth and challenge across the curriculum.

Areas for improvement

The playgroup was going to continue to encourage parents/carers to have a more active role in evaluating the service.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

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 the Care Inspectorate re-grading a Quality Statement within the Quality of Management and Leadership Theme (or for childminders, Quality of Staffing Theme) as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme being re-graded as unsatisfactory (1).

5 Summary of grades

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 3	5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 2	5 - Very Good
Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 3	5 - Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 4	5 - Very Good

6 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
23 Jun 2011	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and Leadership 4 - Good
24 Nov 2010	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and Leadership 4 - Good

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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