Little Seedlings Playgroup
Day Care of Children

Mayfield & Easthouses Church Hall
Bogwood Court
Mayfield
Dalkeith
EH22 5DG

Telephone: 07415 245 361

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 8 February 2018

Service provided by: Committee Of Little Seedlings Playgroup

Service provider number: SP2003002883

Care service number: CS2003011958
About the service

Little Seedlings playgroup is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 25 children at any one time aged between two and five years. Little Seedlings playgroup operates three mornings a week from a church hall in the town of Mayfield Midlothian. The accommodation available to the playgroup consists of a church hall, kitchen, toilets and a small outside play area.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure that they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives. We check that services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). Set up by the Scottish Government GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. GIRFEC is being woven into all policy, procedure, strategy and legislation that affects young people and their families. 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 indicators. We use the indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

What people told us

Before the inspection took place we sent fifteen Care Standards Questionnaires to the service for distribution among families using the service. Five of these were returned before the inspection took place.

All of the families who returned our questionnaires told us they strongly agreed with the statement “Overall I am happy with the quality of care my child receives in this service.” In addition we spoke to three parents during the inspection.

Individual comments included the following:

"My child has been only been at the playgroup for a short while. All staff are friendly and helped my child to settle in. They can’t wait to get into playgroup and have fun.”
"My child loves the playgroup. Catherine and her team are excellent.”
"The playgroup is great. It’s a safe place for my child to play and it gives me a chance to get other things done. Catherine provides a really good service my child likes coming and the staff are friendly.”
"I’ve no complaints and my child is happy, that’s really all that matters.”

Children attending the service appeared happy in the care of staff. Staff knew the children well and. They were kind and responsive offering care and support to children throughout the session."
Self assessment

The service has not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked for information in the service's own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. There was no self assessment or quality assurance paperwork to view. The impact of this is reflected in the report.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support 3 - Adequate
Quality of environment 3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing 3 - Adequate
Quality of management and leadership 2 - Weak

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Parents and children were welcomed into the service by staff who knew them well. A range of opportunities to share information helped ensure that parents were kept informed about activities within the playgroup. They included daily conversation as children were dropped of and picked up, a face book page, occasional questionnaires and newsletters. Parents who spoke to us on the day of the inspection and those who completed our Care Standards questionnaires told us that they felt well informed about how their children had spent their time in the playgroup.

Staff interactions with children were caring and supportive. Staff’s knowledge of individual children was apparent from conversations we had with them. Staff showed respect for children’s interests and ideas by using them to influence the activities to them.

Children were supported and encouraged to follow good hygiene procedures including hand washing at specific points in the day. This helped prevent the spread of infection and encouraged the development of good habits for life. Accidents and incidents were recorded appropriately. Parents were asked to sign accident forms. This confirmed that they understood what had happened to their child and were aware of any first aid given to them.

The service did not have a medication policy. The manager told us staff did not administer medication due to the short length of the playgroup sessions. This did not take account of children who might need emergency medication. We asked the manager to provide families with written information about the circumstances in which medication would be given and the procedures which would be followed. They agreed to do this, we will follow this up at the next inspection.

During the previous inspection we saw that snack was presented to children already plated and their drinks were poured for them. This was a missed opportunity for children to practice their fine motor skills and support confidence through the opportunity to make independent choices. We asked the manager to review the snack routine ensuring that children were given opportunities to make choices, serve their own food pour their own drinks. We made a recommendation about this. The practice had not changed, the recommendation is not met and is repeated below.

See recommendation 1
During the previous inspection we looked at children’s individual folders. We found there was no recorded evidence of how staff would take forward next steps for children’s development. We made a recommendation about this. The manager had changed the format of children’s folders however practice had not changed the recommendation is not met and is repeated below.
See recommendation 2

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. It is recommended that staff support children’s development by allowing them to take a greater role in the preparation, serving and choosing of their daily snack. Giving children opportunities to prepare food, serve themselves and pour their own drinks would support their development and self esteem.
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 (NCS) Standard 6 Support and development.

2. It is recommended that the manager supports staff in recording observations about individual children’s development and achievements. They should ensure that observations are followed by meaningful next steps which clearly support children to reach their developmental potential and promote positive outcomes.
NCS Standard 6 Support and development.
Standard 13 Improving the service.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The secure environment gave children the opportunity to move around freely and make their own choices from the toys and activities available to them.

Links with the local library had been developed. This allowed staff to borrow a range of books which supported children’s interests. The book area was well supported by staff and popular with children. Several children returned to this area a number of times during the session to read by themselves or to listen to staff reading to them.

Children enjoyed role play however their play was limited by use of one purpose toys. We suggested that the provider consider supplementing some of the one purpose plastic toys with more loose parts and natural materials. This would support and extend children’s imaginative play opportunities allowing them greater opportunities to explore the world of their imaginations. We will follow this up at the next inspection.

We found that children’s opportunities for artistic and creative experiences were limited to drawing, playdough and to a supervised painting activity. The provider told us that limitations on the use of the hall made it difficult
for some of the more messy creative activities to take place. We asked the provider to reflect on the impact of these opportunities on children’s development and directed her to the documents ‘Building the Ambition’ and ‘My Creative Journey’ for ideas on how to take this forward. We will follow this up at the next inspection.

In the previous inspection report we found that although the service has access to a small outdoor play area and children occasionally visited a nearby park and went for local walks, access to outdoor play was not offered consistently throughout the year. We made a recommendation about this. The manager confirmed that this practice had not changed. Opportunities for active outdoor play had not improved since the last inspection took place. The recommendation is not met and is repeated below.

The provider told us that they carried out a daily visual risk assessment of the parts of the building used by the service, they included the main hall, kitchen and toilet areas. However there was no written record of this. In addition there was no record of how any concerns identified through the risk assessment process would be dealt with. We made a recommendation about this.

**Requirements**

**Number of requirements:** 0

**Recommendations**

**Number of recommendations:** 2

1. It is recommended that the manager looks for ways to improve children’s opportunities to experience the benefits of outdoor play throughout the year. NCS Standard 5 Quality of experience.

2. It is recommended that the manager develops a written risk assessment of the parts of the building used by children and staff. This should be checked on a regular basis and should include information about how any concerns relating to the building or to damaged toys and equipment would be dealt with. NCS Standard 2 A safe environment.

**Grade:** 3 - adequate

**Quality of staffing**

**Findings from the inspection**

The staff were aware of one another’s strengths and used them to support the children. Since the last inspection they had taken part in training in first aid and food hygiene. This helped ensure they were able to support these aspects of children’s wellbeing.

We found that not all eligible staff working in the service had registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC is the body that sets out the qualifications necessary for all staff working in the care sector. All
staff must be registered with the SSSC within six months of starting to work in the sector. This has resulted in a requirement being made under the heading Management and Leadership.

A long term volunteer is currently working full-time in the service. They told us their intention was to take part in formal childcare training. We asked the provider to check with the SSSC whether the volunteer should be registered because of the length of their voluntary service. We will follow this up at the next inspection.

Some of the key documents supporting best practice in work with young children were held in the service. However there was no evidence that progress had been made on using the documents which included ‘Building the Ambition’ and ‘My World Outdoors’. Implementation of these documents was identified in the previous inspection as areas for development. Staff’s lack of knowledge in using these documents meant they were not always able to offer children the range of experiences they needed to support them and develop their potential.

We made a recommendation about this.
See recommendation 1.

Staff were able to describe the action they would take in the event of any child protection concerns. However all staff needed to take part on refresher training in child protection. The provider was not able to locate the child protection policy. This meant staff were not able to refer to the policy for guidance. We were not able to confirm that the policy had been shared with families who had recently joined the service.

We made a recommendation about this.
See recommendation 2.

**Requirements**

**Number of requirements:** 0

**Recommendations**

**Number of recommendations:** 2

1. It is recommended that in order to offer children a wider range of play and activity experiences staff should take part in training in best practice documents and how they could be used in daily practice to support childrens overall development.

   NCS Standard 5 Quality of Experience.

   NCS Standard 13 Improving the service.

2. It is recommended that in order to protect children staff should take part in child protection training. The services child protection policy should always be available for consultation and guidance and should be shared with staff and families.

   NCS Standard 12 Confidence in staff.

   Standard 13 Improving the service.

**Grade:** 3 - adequate

**Quality of management and leadership**
Findings from the inspection

As part of the staff team the manager spent time in the service. This allowed her to monitor staff, get to know the children and spend time with parents.

The playgroup was led by a parents committee. Being able to put themselves forward for a role in the committee helped ensure that all parents had the opportunity to be involved in the running of the group.

Families were positive about the service the playgroup provided. All of the families who returned our Care Standards questionnaires told us they strongly agreed with the statement “Overall I am happy with the quality of care my child receives this service.”

In the previous two inspections we made a recommendation relating to quality assurance and the lack of a development plan. During the last inspection the manager had made a start in using an online self-evaluation tool. We discussed the importance of ensuring that this and other improvements were monitored to ensure they were embedded practice which supported the on-going development of the service. No further progress had been made, there was no development plan or quality assurance system in place for the service. The recommendation is carried forward for the third time.

See recommendation 1.

During the inspection we found that the manager registration with the Scottish Social Services Council had been allowed to lapse. The SSSC is the body that registers staff working in the in the care sector. All staff working in the care sector must be registered with the SSSC.

We made a requirement about this.

See requirement 1.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. It is required that the committee take immediate action to ensure that the manager is registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. They must take the following action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service:

   - The manager must step down from their role until their registration with the SSSC is confirmed.
   - The manager must not carry out any personal care tasks or be left alone with children until their registration with the SSSC is confirmed.
   - The committee must appoint another individual who is registered with the SSSC and who has the capacity to act as manager in the interim period.
   - The committee must risk assess the current situation and satisfy themselves that the actions they have taken are sufficient to protect and support children attending the service.

This is in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011(2011/210) - regulation 4 Welfare of users and regulation 9 Fitness of employees.

Time scale: within one week of being notified of this requirement.
Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The service should ensure that they establish a development plan for the playgroup and implement effective quality assurance processes to ensure that regular and meaningful evaluations of the service take place. NCS Standard 14 Well managed service.

Grade: 2 - weak

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that staff support children’s development and independence by giving them a greater role in the preparation, serving and choosing of their daily snack. Giving children the opportunity to prepare food, serve themselves and pour their own drinks would support their development and self esteem. National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 (NCS) Standard 6 Support and development.

This recommendation was made on 28 October 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

During the inspection we saw that children’s food was served to them already plated. Childrens drinks were poured for them. There were no opportunities for children to be independent. The recommendation is not met and is now carried forward into this inspection.
Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the manager supports staff in recording observations about individual children’s development and achievements. They should ensure that observations are followed with meaningful next steps which clearly support them to reach their developmental potential.
NCS Standard 6 Support and Development.

This recommendation was made on 28 October 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation
We looked at a sample of folders. They showed that more information was being recorded in children’s folders however we did not find evidence of next steps for development.
The recommendation is not met and is now carried forward into this inspection.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the manager looks for ways to improve children’s opportunities to experience the benefits of outdoor play throughout the year.
NCS Standard 5 Quality of experience.

This recommendation was made on 28 October 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation
Children did not play outdoors during the inspection. The manager conformed that the service had not been able to meet the recommendation.
The recommendation is not met and is now carried forwards into this inspection.

Recommendation 4

The service should ensure that they work on the development plan for the playgroup and implement effective processes to ensure that regular and meaningful evaluations take place.
NCS Standard 14 Well managed service.

This recommendation was made on 28 October 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation
No action had been taken there were no formal quality assurance processes in place. There was no development plan.
The recommendation is not met and is now carried forward into this inspection.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.
No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

### Inspection and grading history

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Gradings</th>
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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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