St. Andrews Church Playgroup
Day Care of Children

St. Andrews Church Hall
High Street
Inverurie
AB51 3QJ

Telephone: 07854 043011

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 September 2019

Service provided by:
St. Andrews Church Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003000533

Service no:
CS2003002672
About the service

This service has been registered since 1 April 2002

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

St. Andrews Church Playgroup is an established day care of children service located in the town of Inverurie in Aberdeenshire. The group operates from a church building with direct access to a small, well equipped outdoor play area. Funded sessions provided by Aberdeenshire Council are offered to children age 3 to not yet attending primary school. The service operates during term time only.

The written aims and vision of the group are displayed for the benefit of parents and state: "through effective leadership, staff teamwork and appropriate opportunities for staff training our vision is to encourage and support our children to achieve their full potential in a safe, happy and welcoming environment. To provide this we will monitor and evaluate regularly the quality of our provision and standards of our practice and plan for their continual improvement."

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), 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 Getting It Right For Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

What people told us

Children attending at the time of the inspection were observed to be happy, busy and engaged. Positive, nurturing relationships had developed between staff and the children. We found the staff team were very kind and caring with respectful approaches observed.

Children confidently spoke to us about what they were doing at playgroup. They said:

“Sometimes (staff member) comes up to us at playgroup with a pen and paper and asks us what we’d like for snack. I like cheese, sandwiches and carrots”.

“I’m making cherry cakes. I’m using jewels for cherries and needs to cook for 4 minutes. (Child’s name) is setting the table. There’s 4 places”.

“I’m making a pizza, cheese and mushroom on top. I’m going to melt it next”.

“I’m putting a frame on my picture. That’s the slide, that’s the climbing frame and that’s me. I need the frame to stick. It’s for my mummy”.

“I like bright red because it’s shiny. I like bright blue because it’s really nice and sparkly”.

“I’m going to draw my whole family, my dog as well”.

“I like dinosaurs but I don’t know what baby dinosaurs might eat”.

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“I’m waiting for the Ipad. I want to play the mermaid game”.

During the inspection we spoke with three parents and carers. Feedback from parents overall was very positive. They told us:

“Child well settled, perfectly happy. Love the service, good for my kids. Staff got to grips with who my children are and know them well. They recognised individual personalities and strengths. Their approach and encouragement was right for them. An electronic report is sent out at the end of the term. Happy with the service. Staff are caring, really know the kids and genuinely do their best for them”.

“Child started at the beginning of term. It encompasses all that a little one needs. Can’t beat the start that children get at this service. Get a more in-depth education. Topics covered are very relevant and focused. They brain storm to get the children’s ideas. Staff are lovely, well experienced, nurture and care for the children. Listen to parents and always take on board requests. Get out doors and enjoy it. Lots of trips, walks in the community, eg shops to buy snack and the garden centre. Provides a wholesome education for pre-school”.

“Very good support given by staff, child’s needs met. Good communication, app makes us aware of child’s learning and development. Would like to know more in-depth information. Child likes coming, initially found it hard to settle, now loves coming and loves the routine. Loves out doors. Staff work with me to meet any need. Snack healthy, fruit daily and child smile visit. Visits to the library. Enjoy taking the opportunity to attend sessions to help out”.

“Completed information before child started and had a settling in visit. Staff lovely. She has grown in confidence. Very happy, good communication. Children get outdoors. Child speaks about her playgroup friends. Like the traditional, small setting. Has a good reputation”.

**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. We made some suggestions as to how their monitoring could be further developed.

**From this inspection we graded this service as:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of care and support</td>
<td>5 - Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of environment</td>
<td>5 - Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of staffing</td>
<td>5 - Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership</td>
<td>4 - Good</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Quality of care and support**

Findings from the inspection

The interaction between staff and children was sensitive and responsive. They were working well together as a team to create an inclusive, nurturing environment where children and their families felt welcome, listened to and respected. Positive outcomes for children were being supported by staff and parents working well together.

Throughout our inspection children were happy and confident. We found that staff had an enabling attitude and engaged positively with children and had formed positive attachments with them. Children’s experiences were shown using talking and thinking floor books. Their interests and ideas were used as a starting point for planning and offered a flexible and responsive approach to the planning process.

We saw noted staff had started to work with children to develop an understanding of the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. This was positive as it gave children the knowledge and language of the impact these have on their everyday lives. We saw they were beginning to understand about the importance of keeping safe, being nurtured and keeping active.

We discussed how the service should develop children’s personal plans to ensure they clearly identify how the service was meeting children’s health, welfare and safety needs. We suggested they took account of the work they had undertaken with the children around the wellbeing indicators.

Staff knew the children well and reflected confidently on their development needs and how they supported them to achieve. Children’s learning journeys reflected their achievements, progress and some next steps. These were regularly shared with parents. We asked the manager to continue to support staff in writing more outcome focused, evaluative observations. Implementing these changes should make it easier to track progress, identify and follow-up on next steps for individual children.

Children’s health and wellbeing was promoted in a range of ways including promoting healthy eating and having effective systems for the safe management of medication. Children were offered a variety of healthy snack choices. Those children with food intolerances were well catered for. We noted that children were now more involved in making choices, preparing and setting up for snack. We saw that staff sat with children during snack times which were relaxed and unhurried enabling children to develop their social skills and build friendships.

Positive behaviour and social skills were encouraged by staff as children were supported through play with others. Praise was used sensitively and proportionately to celebrate children’s achievements.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment
Findings from the inspection

Children’s health and wellbeing was highly respected at the service. Settling in routines planned for each child had supported secure relationships to develop, which meant children felt safe and contented within the setting.

Staff had created a safe, calm, inclusive environment. Staff consulted children consistently and responsive planning helped to ensure their interests were reflected in their environment. Referring to Building the Ambition, staff had undertaken a review of the effectiveness of the playroom and resources. They had identified improvements such as creating a library rich in books, more opportunities for science and the use of digital technology. This will help to ensure continued provision of a stimulating, challenging, child-led environment.

Play spaces were designed to encourage children to select what they wished to play with; such as, making choices about their learning and following their interests. Children had access to a range of quality, appropriate toys and equipment with natural open-ended resources. These were available indoors and outside, encouraging imaginative play, exploration and creativity. Children had direct access to the outdoor play area. The older children confidently chose when they wanted to go outside and when to return indoors. The pace of the session was much more child led with less interruptions throughout the session. This supported children’s and general wellbeing.

The outdoor play area provided an extended range of loose parts and natural play equipment. Outdoor play was a large part of all children’s daily routine. Staff sensitively supported the children new to playgroup to gain confidence to play and explore outside. Most of the older children engaged in a variety of interesting activities encouraging imagination, creativity and decision-making. Some of the children had fun with their friends. We heard planning and negotiation take place between them as they played with the mud kitchen making cherry cakes, making music and playing in the pirate ship. We observed staff support all the children well, intervening when necessary, whilst encouraging independence and confidence.

Better use of Care Inspectorate publications ‘My world outdoors’ and ‘My creative journey’ would support the service commitment to continue improve and develop the playgroup environment and experiences for children.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We saw that the staff communicated well with each other and worked effectively as a team. This ensured children were well looked after and that the daily routines ran smoothly. Staff had built trusting relationships with both children and families. Staff made time to talk to parents, made them feel welcome and worked in
partnership in meeting children’s needs. Good working relationships contributed to a warm and nurturing atmosphere for the children.

We saw staff were appropriately deployed with sufficient staff working with children at all times. This contributed to ensuring that children were safe and their care needs were met. We found staff were skilled in describing the needs and interests of individual children and how they ensured that as far as possible these areas of interest and individual needs were met.

Effective procedures were in place to ensure staff were safely recruited. We saw that staff were appropriately qualified and registered to practice with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC).

The manager and staff had a good understanding of the importance of safeguarding children. The team received regular child protection training to help them keep children safe and protect them from harm. This approach ensured that children were valued, safe, and secure.

The staff team were part of a local cluster group and benefited from regular opportunities to meet with other early years professionals and take part in informative workshops. Staff told us they valued these opportunities to share experiences and take part in professional dialogue with early years colleagues.

Staff were trained, competent and skilled. They were enthusiastic about developing new skills and understood their professional responsibility to seek out learning opportunities that would maximise children’s care and learning experience. They spoke confidently about their learning and the impact this had on outcomes for children.

We suggested that manager and staff to refer more to best practice guidance and develop a better understanding of the health and social care standards. This would help to ensure the team continued to be confident that the quality of care and support being given to children and families was in line with the standards and best practice.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The manager had a good overview of the service and was clear on aspects of the service that could be developed, whilst being aware of the strengths within the team. Good communication between the manager and staff meant everyone was clear on their role and the expectations of the service.
The manager had a regular presence in the play area, working directly alongside staff, providing direction and guidance, when appropriate. This leadership style gave the manager a good insight into individual and team practice, helping them to identify any support needs.

Staff meetings, discussions and formal appraisals took place to ensure there was open communication between the committee, manager and staff and any improvements were agreed by the whole staff team and acted upon. We highlighted the benefits of the committee and manager referring to the National Induction Resource on the SSSC website as an additional tool to support the planning and undertaking appraisals and support and supervision.

Training needs were identified and discussed with staff and support was given to staff to undertake further training to support their ongoing professional development. This meant they continued to enhance the quality of care and support provided for children.

The manager discussed their continual development of quality assurance processes which supported service evaluation and improvement. We looked at floor books and assessments using Building the Ambition and saw that progress had been made in further developing self-evaluation practice in the setting.

Improvement plans now highlighted agreed priorities, the progress made and evidence of developments. These priorities included effective use of quality assurance tools, monitoring of playroom practice, a review of vision of aims and supporting individual leadership roles. We saw the service were making good progress taking these forward. We looked at the monitoring system and suggested they continue to develop their approach to ensure it is meaningful and supports improvement.

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.
Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

In order to fully support children’s health and wellbeing, appropriate information should be gathered and used to develop effective care and learning plans.

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

This recommendation was made on 13 February 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The manager told us a review of children’s personal plans had been undertaken involving staff. Plans sampled had been updated and contained vital information required to help staff keep children safe and well. Medical care plans had now contained more detail to help staff effectively support children who may require medication. This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 2

In order to keep children healthy and protected from the spread of infection, hand washing facilities must be improved to enable children to practice good hand washing.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2: A Safe Environment

This recommendation was made on 13 February 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Staff had improved the service approach to hand washing. Warm running water was now available for hand washing which reduced the risk of spreading infection. This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 3

In order to improve approaches to learning and teaching, staff should build on their wider range of training.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2: A Safe Environment

This recommendation was made on 13 February 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The staff team were part of a local cluster group and benefited from regular opportunities to meet with other early years professionals and take part in informative workshops. Staff told us they valued these opportunities to share experiences and take part in professional dialogue with early years colleagues. Additional training, undertaking online training and researching online had given staff additional skills and knowledge to provide quality experiences for children. This recommendation has been met.
Recommendation 4

Management should develop their system of quality assurance to improve outcomes for children by monitoring and improving all areas of practice.

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 13 February 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We saw that significant progress had been made in developing and improving the service quality assurance processes which supported service evaluation and improvement. We saw that the use of floor books and quality assurance tools such as Building the Ambition had contributed to further developing self-evaluation practice in the setting. This had resulted in improved outcomes for children.

Improvement plans now highlighted agreed priorities, the progress made and evidence of developments. We saw the service were making good progress taking these forward. We looked at the monitoring system and suggested they continue to develop their approach to ensure it is meaningful and supports improvement. This recommendation has been met.

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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Gradings</th>
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