

Flexible Childcare Services (Aberdeenshire) – Inverurie Day Care of Children

Inverurie Community Campus
Jackson Street
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 June 2021

Service provided by:
Flexible Childcare Services Scotland
SCIO

Service provider number:
SP2019013370

Service no:
CS2019376997

About the service

Flexible Childcare Services - Inverurie has been registered since 20 December 2019 to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 18 children with additional support needs of an age to attend primary or secondary school.

The manager is also the manager of Flexible Childcare Services (Aberdeenshire) - Stonehaven, Flexible Childcare Services (Aberdeenshire) - Alford and Flexible Childcare Services (Aberdeenshire) - Kemnay.

The service is accommodated within Inverurie Community Campus and can access various areas that best suit their needs. This includes a communal area with kitchen and large outdoor play area.

Aims of the service include being committed to "provide high quality respite care for children aged 5-18 with additional support needs".

This was a focused inspection to evaluate how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic. This inspection was carried out by inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

We carried out a site visit to the service on 19 May 2021 and completed the inspection using telephone calls, virtual meetings, and the submission of documents. Feedback was given on 15 June 2021.

What people told us

We contacted four parents during the inspection. They felt that staff were kind, caring and responsive to their child's needs and that they were very well supported by the service. They spoke very positively about the level of communication during the pandemic and described how staff introduced new initiatives to ease anxieties and stresses experienced by the children attending.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

5 - Very Good

5.1: Children's health and wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Children are nurtured and supported throughout their changed experience in their early learning and childcare setting.
- Effective communication with families enables responsive care to support children through changing circumstances.

Children and their families were very well supported by the service during the pandemic. Changes to service provision during closure of the setting meant some families were able to benefit from care at home visits from familiar staff. This consistency of care helped children and families cope during challenging and stressful times. Regular supportive phone calls and emails kept families well informed and ensured they received the correct support if needed. Garden visits and the delivery of Christmas parcels were well received by the children who were missing their friends and finding the pressures of lockdown difficult.

Staff were very aware of the impact of COVID-19 on the young people attending the senior group and had introduced measures to ease their anxieties. Changes to their routines, closure of the school during lockdown and the transition to new premises was quite traumatic and difficult for some of the young people. Staff responded by adding extra life skill classes which very successfully helped ease anxieties, supported friendships and contributed to happier and more confident individuals.

Most of the children and young people had attended the groups for a number of years and had built very positive relationships with staff. This meant staff knew their personalities and care needs well and provided very individualised care that helped children and young people feel relaxed, at ease and able to flourish.

Up to date and current support plans were specific to individual children and detailed their likes, wishes and areas of support. Risk assessments were in place for each individual and these raised staff's awareness of measures needed to be implemented to keep children safe.

Systems and procedures were in place to ensure children and young people were kept free from abuse, harm or neglect. Staff had accessed child protection training and were confident in GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) to help ensure families were given the right support at the right time.

5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.

- Children are protected as staff take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

The service was located within the newly built Inverurie Community Campus. The purpose built accommodation was freshly decorated and spacious and enabled staff to physically distance without compromising the care given to the children. Surfaces were clutter free and easily cleaned. Sensory rooms were well utilised to give the children the space and relaxation needed after a busy day.

Systems and procedures were well managed by the room senior to ensure a consistent approach to infection prevention and control. Tables, chairs and touch points were cleaned prior to the young people attending.

Enhanced cleaning at the end of the session ensured toys and games were cleaned or unavailable for use until safe to do so. The sensory rooms were cleaned prior to and after use to help prevent the transmission of infection. Risk assessments, policies and procedures had been reviewed and updated to help keep everyone safe and well.

New routines and procedures had been introduced to keep families and children safe at drop off and pick up times. School staff escorted the young people to the group and temperatures were taken and children's hands were washed immediately. However, equipment used by the children, such as wheel chairs or walkers, were not cleaned as they entered the service. This was discussed during inspection and new procedures were implemented. Children were collected by parents outside the building to help keep everyone safe and well.

If they were happy to do so, staff and the young people over 12 years were able to participate in regular COVID-19 testing. This helped prevent the spread of infection by identifying anyone who may test positive without displaying any symptoms. Should any child or staff member develop COVID-19 symptoms, arrangements were in place to keep them and others safe.

Children and young people had a good understanding of the importance of hand washing at key times throughout their time at the service. They were familiar with the routines on arrival and before and after eating. This was well managed, and we noted the handwashing area was wiped down between each individual use. This helped reduce the spread of infection.

The outdoor play area was very attractive with lots of opportunities for physical and sensory play. Due to inclement weather, the children were not outside during the site visit, but described with enthusiasm their favourite outdoor activities. This contributed to children's mental and physical wellbeing as well as helping to keep them safe and free from infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.3: Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19.

- Staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and families.**
- Staff are well supported and confident.**

A very competent and experienced senior member of staff managed the day to day running of the service and provided staff with good leadership and support. Their diligence and commitment promoted very positive outcomes for children and helped keep everyone safe and well.

Staff spoke very positively about senior management and felt very well supported during a difficult time when the manager of the service was absent. Regular contact from senior management during the pandemic helped ease any staff anxieties and worries. The recently recruited manager was very enthusiastic and was beginning to build positive relationships with the staff and the children. They regularly visited the service to provide support and monitor children's experiences.

Staff had accessed AZILO and ALDO (Internet learning programmes) to update their knowledge in infection control, child protection and risk assessment. This was evident in their practice and consistent approach to infection, prevention and control. Staff wore face coverings when needed and observed physical distancing guidance in line with Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance. During snack children sat physically distanced but the caring and warm interactions with staff helped create a relaxed and natural mood.

The staff team worked regularly at the service and knew the children's personalities and care needs well. Children were treated very respectfully with kindness and care, and responded with smiles and cheerful conversations. Some young people who became agitated and frustrated were treated with patience in a gentle manner until they felt ready to join in with activities. Those who found socialising with peers difficult, were able to spend time alone and encouraged to join in with activities when they felt able.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	5 - Very Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	5 - Very Good
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	5 - Very Good

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