

# Auchterless Pre-school Playgroup Day Care of Children

Auchterless Village Hall  
Kirkton of Auchterless  
Auchterless  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
2 September 2021

**Service provided by:**  
Auchterless Pre-school Playgroup

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000413

**Service no:**  
CS2003002536

## About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

Auchterless Pre-School Playgroup is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children from two years to those not yet attending primary school. The pre-school playgroup is accommodated within the local village hall, and when operating has the exclusive use of the large hall, small hall, kitchen and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor area adjacent to the hall which the playgroup had developed to provide an inviting outdoor environment for the children.

A welcome pack has been produced giving full details of the aims and objectives, and the policies and procedures for the service. The aims of the service include to:

"Provide a safe, nurturing, 'family' environment for children to have fun and learn through their own play experiences".

As part of this inspection we took into consideration: 'Key question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality Indicator 5.2: infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality of care and support.

The Care Inspectorate 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 parents to work with 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.

We compiled this report following an unannounced visit which took place over the two days of 24 August and 26 August 2021. Feedback was given on 02 September 2021 to the provider and manager using Microsoft Teams technology. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

## What people told us

At the time of inspection, seven children attended. They were happy, settled and confident enjoying their play experiences in a warm nurturing environment. Children also had fun as they played in the garden benefiting from fresh air and exercise.

Using the telephone, we spoke with three parents who were happy to share their views about their children's experiences at playgroup as follows:

One parent told us that settling in took place outdoors until her child was happy to go into the service with a member of staff who was lovely. They weren't sure if their child had a key worker and had not received feedback from the staff about their child's progress. The parent had raised this at a committee meeting and immediate action had been taken. The 'WhatsApp' application is now used to share what children are doing, and the parent said they are now able to speak with their child about what they have been doing at playgroup. The parent said they hadn't seen a profile for their child.

A second parent said the initial settling in didn't go too well. However, after lockdown things were much better as a new manager was in place. She messaged the parent to let them know that their child was ok and had made activities like bubbles available which she knew the child liked. There were new forms to fill in after lockdown. The parent said: "they got feedback from the staff when they picked up their child about what was for snack, and how their child had been with the other children". The communication is very open. The parent said: "they had no updates about their child's progress, just the feedback at pickup". The parent feels the new manager is better at communicating and the team work well together.

The third parent we spoke with said: "their child loves playgroup - they felt the environment was safe; they trusted the staff and settling in had gone well. They filled in registration forms and 'All about me' forms. On return from lockdown emails and groups chats were used for communication. This shared things like dropping off at the entrance, washing hands and wearing masks. The service always kept in touch and parents knew exactly what to expect and felt reassured as a result". The parent also said: "they got updates through emails and WhatsApp but nothing on their child's development".

## Self assessment

The service submitted the Key Question 5 self evaluation document before the inspection, we found the self evaluation provided sufficient evidence that they were working in accordance with Covid 19 guidance.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

Children were settled, confident and happy. They benefited from a nurturing, kind, and caring playgroup experience. This supported them to feel secure, respected and loved. Staff were aware of the potential impact Covid-19 had on children's emotional wellbeing. Parents told us that staff had supported their children to feel emotionally ready to return to playgroup after the national lockdown. Staff provided opportunities for children to explore their feelings and emotions in an environment with resources and toys that they particularly enjoyed and were familiar with.

Most parents told us that important information had been shared verbally with staff. This included details of changes in routine and about children's current needs to allow staff to support their health, wellbeing and safety. This had not always been recorded in individual personal plans. As a result there was no record of any progress made of staff supporting children's health and wellbeing needs.

Many personal plans had not been reviewed or updated. We reminded the provider and manager that personal plans should be reviewed in consultation with parents at least every six months to ensure that children's current care and support needs were supported at the right time **(see recommendation 1)**.

All children had a keyworker who knew their key children very well. They were able to tell us about the children's personalities, what they enjoyed and any support needed. They also told us about individual children's achievements and how they had extended their interests and learning in these areas.

However, learning journeys which recorded children's play and learning were not always up-to-date and did not reflect the good knowledge that staff had of the children, and the support they provided. The observations were descriptive and did not detail learning outcomes. Next steps were not always noted. We discussed how improvements could be made so that children's progress and support needs are clearly identified and planned for through quality observation, planning and assessment **(see recommendation 2 restated from the previous inspection)**.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted in a range of ways including: promoting healthy eating, daily fresh air, active play and having effective systems for the safe management of medication. Snack times were well managed and food options were healthy. We saw that staff supported children well during snack and lunch times which were relaxed and unhurried enabling children to develop their social skills and build friendships. We noted some of the food options within children's packed lunches were not always healthy.

The manager told us that parents had been given access to best practice guidance through the service's Facebook page the previous term to raise awareness of the benefits of the importance of healthy eating. They plan to share this information again for the benefit of the parents whose children are new to the service.

The service had introduced appropriate infection, prevention and control systems in response to Covid-19. These included enhanced cleaning, hand washing, and parents were not routinely permitted to enter the building. We observed all areas of the service were well ventilated, hygienic and safe.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements: 0**

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations: 2**

1.  
Children's personal plans should be reviewed to ensure they clearly outline how children's health, welfare and safety needs will be met. Plans should contain all essential information to support staff to meet children's daily care needs. Plans should also be regularly monitored by the manager to ensure consistency in staff recordings.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15) and "I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources" ( HSCS 4.27).

2. The manager should ensure that children's personal profiles (learning journeys) include reflective and evaluative observations of the children's play and learning. Staff should meaningfully log children's progress and identify and support their next steps in learning. This will make it easier to track children's progress.

"My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15).

**Grade:** 3 - adequate

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The service had recently returned to their registered premises which had undergone major refurbishment following extensive water damage during a period of closure during lockdown. We found that children were being cared for in an environment that was bright, clean, tidy and well maintained. We saw staff were in the process of arranging display boards that would show the work of the service and reflect children's learning and achievements.

Print was displayed throughout the playroom and resources provided enhanced opportunities for children to progress in literacy and numeracy skills. There were books and mark making materials such as clip boards available in different areas for the children to access and to develop their understanding of literacy. Numeracy resources were also integrated throughout, for example: scales beside the kitchen for the children to use and experiment with.

Children's ideas and interests were documented within the service planning folder. These ideas were used as a starting point for planning and offered a flexible and responsive approach to the planning process. We saw children were able to direct their own play and follow their interests. They made good use of the space and chose where to play. We observed children engaged in a variety of self chosen activities encouraging imagination, creativity and decision-making. Some of the children had fun with their friends and we heard planning and negotiation taking place between them as they played.

Staff realised the benefits of providing energetic play for the children both indoors and out. An area had been set up indoors with soft play equipment which the children were enjoying and making good use of for both energetic and imaginative play.

Staff tried to made sure that children were outdoors every day, despite the layout of the building preventing free flow access to outdoors for children. The outdoor area had been further developed since our previous inspection, and now provided improved opportunities for children to explore, experiment and negotiate with their peers.

Loose parts in particular enabled children to be creative and imaginative. We saw building activities and imaginative play. The mud kitchen, trucks, sand and fishing for dinosaurs were particularly popular with the children.

We saw that appropriate risk assessments had been produced by the manager for the play areas, out doors and taking account of Covid-19.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

The interaction between staff and children was sensitive and responsive. Staff 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.

Children were able to play and learn in an environment where staff were flexible and committed. Consistency of staff meant that positive relationships were formed, and attachments developed so children felt safe and secure. We saw children seeking staff out for reassurance and involving them in their play. We saw this provided staff with an opportunity to extend children's play and learning experiences.

Effective procedures were in place to ensure staff were safely recruited. We saw that staff were appropriately qualified or working towards gaining a qualification. They were also registered within the appropriate timescales to practice with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC). We noted that the service staff development policy provided clear guidance to staff in relation to both the service responsibilities and individual's responsibility for undertaking training in accordance with SSSC requirements.

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

Staff told us they were keen to develop their skills and we found that all staff had attended a range of both core training and training to support children to play, learn and achieve. These had positively impacted on the quality of children's experiences, for example: staff had participated in training on realising the ambition, 'Schemas emerging literacy' and working with two year olds.

Opportunities for training on outdoor learning had reinforced the benefits of learning outdoors, and had provided ideas which they took account of when developing their outdoor area, such as providing natural resources and promoting literacy outdoors.

We found that staff were at the early stages of reflecting on their learning and completing post training evaluations. Taking this forward support the staff to identify the impact of training and how this could improve outcomes for children in their care.

Staff told us they felt valued and spoke positively of the informal opportunities for support available to them. This included regular staff meetings and informal discussions with manager and provider. Introducing a formal structure of staff support would allow them to benefit from opportunities to discuss their role and personal development through one-to-one supervision sessions and a staff appraisal process. This would provide them with opportunities to highlight individual strengths, celebrate achievements and identify areas for further development (**see recommendation 1**).

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. The provider and manager should further develop their process for undertaking staff professional development reviews. This will ensure that staff are provided with the opportunity to discuss their professional development and identify individual achievements and areas for further development.

This is to ensure staffing is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14).

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

The service had undergone a period of change and disruption, for example: they had a period without a manager, with a new manager starting just before lockdown in January 2021. In addition they had to operate within temporary premises due to refurbishment taking place in their registered premises. They are now settling back into their registered premises.

These major disruptions to the day-to-day running of the service had greatly impacted on the provider and new manager having time to focus on improvement work. This included formally evaluating the quality of the provision, auditing and updating personal plans and learning journeys which was recommended at our previous inspection. They have acknowledged this and are beginning to address this outstanding (**recommendation 2**) which has been restated within the Quality of Care and Support section of this report.

Staff described feeling well supported by the manager and an ethos of respect was apparent within the service. This meant that the manager and staff were motivated to develop their own practice and that of the playgroup. We saw that the manager's approach to supporting staff was beginning to have a positive impact on service provision and outcomes for children and their families.

Parents told us that communication could be better in relation to getting feedback on their child's progress and learning. They had also highlighted this at a recent committee meeting and immediate action was taken using a white board and 'WhatsApp' group to provide details about the events of the day and learning planned and undertaken.

The manager plans to start monitoring playroom practice and undertaking audits of personal plans and learning journeys which will be shared with parents. This will ensure parents get an insight into their child's learning and development and become more involved in their children's play and learning. We agreed that introducing with this would feed into the improvements the manager and staff agreed to take forward following our inspection.

The service benefits from the support of the local authority who have supported them to begin evaluate the provision. Together with principal teacher from the local authority they have been working on the implementation of a new improvement plan. We advised that improvement priorities should be achievable and measurable, taking account of the areas identified for improvement identified within this report (**see recommendation 1**).

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. The service should use recognised self-evaluation tools and good practice guidance to develop and implement systems and processes to support robust quality assurance systems. This will support the service to look at what they are doing well, how they could improve and how to take forward changes. This work would have a positive impact on the quality of children's experiences.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard 4.19 which states that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.'

**Grade:** 3 - adequate



## 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

The manager should ensure that children's personal profiles include reflective and evaluative observations of the children's play and learning. Staff should meaningfully log children's progress and identify and support their next steps in learning. This will make it easier to track children's progress.

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

This recommendation was made on 11 October 2017.

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

We noted that observations of children's learning and planning still needed to improve to ensure staff were aware of, and able to capture significant learning. Staff need to develop their understanding of how to effectively track and monitor children's learning and progress.

We have restated this recommendation within the body of this report.

## Recommendation 2

Staff should be supported to attend training on the practice guidance documents:

- Pre-Birth to Three
- Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families and
- Building the Ambition National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

This will help staff to further develop their skills and confidence to enable them to continue to improve outcomes for children.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 14: Well Managed Service.

**This recommendation was made on 11 October 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

We saw that staff had attended training on the: 'Pre-Birth to Three best practice guidance'. They had also referred to: 'Building the Ambition' when developing their self-evaluation tree. We have asked the team to continue to access training to support them to effectively use current best practice to evaluate the service and improve outcomes for children.

We have made a new recommendation asking that the manager and staff to refer to these documents in conjunction with training and support to improve the learning environment for children.

## Recommendation 3

The manager should ensure that children's personal profiles include reflective and evaluative observations of the children's play and learning. Staff should meaningfully log children's progress and identify and support their next steps in learning. This will make it easier to track children's progress.

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

**This recommendation was made on 11 October 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

Staff told us about individual children's achievements and how they had extended their interests and learning in these areas. However, learning journeys which recorded children's play and learning were not always up to date and did not reflect staff's good knowledge of the children and the support they provided. The observations were descriptive and did not detail learning outcomes. Next steps were not always noted. We discussed how improvements could be made so that children's progress and support needs are clearly identified and planned for through quality observation, planning and assessment.

This recommendation has been restated from the previous inspection within the Quality of Care and Support section of this report.

## Recommendation 4

The provider/manager needs to review the learning environment for all children. They need to ensure that children's individual needs are being met and that the environment, resources and activities are of interest to children and offer challenge and stimulation.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state:

"I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices." (HSCS 5.21)

"As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity." (HSCS 2.27)

**This recommendation was made on 27 November 2019.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

The premises had been recently refurbished following extensive flood damage. A lot of thought had gone into the set up of the play areas and resources were well organised so children could choose what they wanted to do. Age appropriate resources were accessible to support developing skills. Natural open-ended materials were available inside and outdoors to provide opportunities for children to encourage natural curiosity and creativity.

Staff actively listened to children and were responsive to their interests and ideas as they added equipment children wanted for their activities. As a result children spent long periods of time at an activity as they were able to try out and implement their ideas. As a result the quality of the learning environment had improved and now provided quality play and learning experiences for the children.

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](http://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
27 Nov 2019	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
11 Oct 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
29 Oct 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
31 Oct 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
16 Nov 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 5 - Very good
1 Nov 2010	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
28 Oct 2009	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
23 Jun 2008	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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