

Swansacre Playgroup Day Care of Children

21-23 Swansacre
Kinross
KY13 8TE

Telephone: 01577 862 071

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 August 2021

Service provided by:
Swansacre Playgroup, a Scottish
Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Service provider number:
SP2016012722

Service no:
CS2016347300

About the service

Swansacre Playgroup is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children at any one time, from age two years to an age not yet attending primary school. From 12 noon to 12.30pm daily, the service may be provided to a maximum of 32 children at any one time, from age two years to an age not yet attending primary school. The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 9 August 2016.

The service operates from 21-23 Swansacre in the town of Kinross, within walking distance of the high street and Loch Leven. The service consists of two adjoining playrooms, one of which has direct access to a spacious outdoor play area. The service is provided by a voluntary management committee who have overall responsibility for the service.

We are testing our new ELC quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged childcare. This inspection was included as part of the test. We have evaluated the service based on key questions and quality indicators linked to the framework. As this was a test, we will not be publishing the evaluations. More information about the quality framework and methodology can be found on our website www.careinspectorate.com

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection which started on 25 August 2021. We gave feedback to the service virtually on 27 August 2021.

What people told us

We sent the service an online questionnaire to share with parents and carers. We received 33 responses. All of those who completed the questionnaire agreed and strongly agreed that they were happy with the quality of care their child received while in the service. Some of their comments included:

'Swansacre has been an excellent support for our child during a difficult time. The staff are all amazing and we are confident and relaxed that when our child attends they are well looked after, is given different opportunities and has the best time when they are there.'

'Staff are very proactive at keeping parents informed in all aspects at all times. Very friendly and accommodating play group, that my child loves!'

'We are absolutely delighted with the care our child receives at Swansacre. We receive regular updates about how our child is getting on and staff are so incredibly friendly and supportive.'

'At the heart of Swansacre is their nurturing approach.'

'Staff are amazing. New management committee seem to have great experience and knowledge and are very friendly and approachable.'

'It's a really nurturing environment, with lots of opportunity for outdoor learning. I have high standards and have utmost faith in the staff to give my child the support they need.'

'Staff take a real interest in each child as wee individuals and have a great relationship with them.'

The children were happy to engage with us and tell us about their time at playgroup. They told us:

'Do you want to play on the slide? I can climb up.'

'There are spider webs with spiders in them.'

'My favourite thing is the swing.'

'(Staff) I've got a potion!'

'Let's go to the boat.'

'It's a Pterodactyl.'

'I draw this for mummy, mummy loves it.'

How good is our care and learning?

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced care which was nurturing and responsive to their needs. Staff were kind and caring in their approach and offered children comfort and cuddles in a sensitive and respectful manner. Staff engaged with children at their level and skilfully supported them to solve problems, make choices and have fun during their time at playgroup.

Staff were knowledgeable about children's individual needs and effectively shared information with each other to promote consistency and continuity of care. We suggested that more detailed information should be recorded in some children's personal plans. This would ensure a holistic view of children's needs were captured including when children are supported by other agencies. This would enable all staff to have a clear record of children's changing and evolving needs to support children to consistently achieve their potential.

Mealtimes were observed to be a relaxed, sociable experience for children which promoted discussion about eating safely and making healthy choices. Some staff sat with children and provided effective support to enable children to have a safe and positive experience. We suggested that staff review the snack experience to increase children's choice about when they want to eat and provide them with further opportunities for independence and responsibility.

1.2 Children are safe and protected

The committee and staff had reviewed the child protection procedures in place and identified they would benefit from an additional staff member being trained as a child protection officer. This was being actioned during the inspection to ensure their child protection procedures were always effectively maintained and appropriate action taken at the earliest opportunity. Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to ensure children were protected. They were aware of the policy and procedures in place to keep children safe. We suggested that staff further developed their understanding of how the effective use of chronologies contribute to supporting the wellbeing of children and families.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were well supported to learn and develop through their play and learning. Children were offered exciting, stimulating and interesting experiences which promoted curiosity, imagination and collaborative play. For example, we saw children having fun, smiling, and laughing as they experimented and created potions. This experience was effectively and skilfully supported by staff to promote children's learning in language and mathematical thinking. As a result, children presented as happy, confident individuals who were making progress in their learning and development.

Children were leaders in their own play and learning. They were encouraged to make choices and be independent. Staff responded to their interests in a meaningful and engaging way. We observed staff using effective questioning to scaffold and extend children's thinking and learning. Children contributed positively to floorbooks which captured their ideas, interests and curiosities and enabled them to reflect on their learning.

Regular observations were recorded to capture children's play and learning in an online learning journal. Children were involved in sharing these with their families. This enabled children to take responsibility for their learning and for families to feel included in their child's development. Staff had identified the need to continue to develop the consistency of observations. We discussed with staff how they could improve the recording of observations with a clearer focus on children's play, learning and development.

Areas for improvement

How good is our setting?

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The playgroup was clean and tidy and provided ample space for children to play and have fun. The environment was safe, and an audit was in place to ensure any maintenance issues were recorded and actioned promptly. Improvements had been made since the last inspection which enabled children to have free flow access between the indoor and outdoor environments. We saw that children were confident moving between these areas and their choices and wishes about where they wanted to play were listened to and respected.

Staff facilitated children's learning and development as they provided additional resources to spark children's curiosity, to be inquisitive and in response to children's interests. The resources in the indoor environment had been reduced to take account of Covid-19. Children were in the process of planning how the indoor environment would be developed moving forward. We saw that they had been involved in creating a mind map to design the large indoor space to enable them to have a sense of ownership of their play and learning space.

Children had a wide variety of exciting opportunities outdoors which met their developmental needs, interests, and curiosities. These experiences offered children rich learning opportunities which included exploring, experimenting, being creative, taking risks and problem solving. As a result, children were highly engaged in their play and learning outdoors throughout the session.

Children's personal information was stored securely and was accessible to staff when needed.

How good is our leadership?

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We found that the service aims and objectives were embedded in the practice observed during the inspection. The vision, value and aims were under review to develop and promote a shared vision for the playgroup. Consultation and collaboration were taking place between the children, families, staff and committee to ensure everyone was included in developing and agreeing the direction of the service.

Since the last inspection, a quality assurance calendar and audits had been implemented. This supported the staff to improve the quality of the service. We discussed how some quality assurance processes could be developed further to continue to support staff to improve their practice. A detailed audit of the service had been carried out by the committee and it was evident they had a clear direction for driving forward improvements.

An improvement plan was in place with realistic and achievable targets. Staff had been involved in identifying the areas for improvement and had a clear understanding of how they would progress. We saw how staff had begun to implement improvements and the positive impact this had on outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team?

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children and staff had developed strong, positive and trusting relationships which supported children to feel safe, secure and loved. Staff were very caring and nurturing in their approach and responded sensitively to children's individual needs.

The committee recognised the importance of supporting and valuing staff and ensuring their wellbeing was prioritised. This recognition enabled staff to feel supported and happy in their work. Staff worked very well as a team, offering support to each other when needed to ensure children's needs were met. As a result of the strong and effective teamwork, children were welcomed into a happy, relaxed and nurturing environment.

Staff had opportunities to reflect on their practice and identify areas for improvement through appraisals. Staff were positive about the introduction of these and told us they felt well supported to improve their practice. Informal discussions also took place to support staff with their development. The committee had identified the need to formalise this process to enable them to support staff development in a more planned and focused way.

Staff had a clear understanding of how children learn and develop. We found they were very reflective practitioners. For example, they had implemented their learning around schematic play into their day-to-day practice to support children's learning and development. Positive progress had also been made in capturing children's voice and contributions through floorbooks. Their improved practice enabled children to be heard and be leaders of their own learning. As a result, children received high quality interactions and experiences from staff who were very passionate about providing positive outcomes for the children in their care.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

In order to ensure children can experience a high quality service that is continually reviewed using best practice guidance, the service should further develop quality assurance systems and an improvement plan. They should make use of evaluative systems such as 'Building the Ambition' and 'How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare' and refer to websites such as Care Inspectorate HUB and Education Scotland's Hub where the service will see recent examples of guidance in practice.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice'. (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 13 December 2019.

Action taken since then

The service has developed their quality assurance processes and introduced a realistic improvement plan to improve outcomes for children.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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