

Abacus Pre-school Nursery - King Street Day Care of Children

416 King Street
Aberdeen
AB24 3BR

Telephone: 01224 626 863

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 September 2021

Service provided by:
Abacus Pre-School Nursery

Service provider number:
SP2003003399

Service no:
CS2003001690

About the service

Abacus Pre-school Nursery - King Street is currently registered to care for up to 47 children of pre-school age. It is registered to provide care and support from three different rooms to cater for different age ranges of children:

- A maximum of 13 children aged zero to under two years shall be cared for in the baby room.
- A maximum of 14 children aged 18 months to under three years shall be cared for in the tweenie room.
- A maximum of 20 children aged two years to those not yet attending primary school shall be cared for in the toddler room.

At the time of inspection, the tweenie room was not in use.

The nursery can operate between the times of 7:45am and 6:00pm.

This service is one of three nurseries in Aberdeen City provided by Abacus Nurseries. It is provided from a property in King Street, Aberdeen. Play rooms are all at ground floor level. There is a secure rear garden for children to enjoy outdoor play and a small car park for parents and carers dropping off and collecting children.

Aims and objectives of the service included to "provide an attractive, welcoming, and safe environment for children, staff, and parents/carers" and to "nurture an ethos of achievements in a climate where staff and children are highly motivated and praised for their effort".

This service has been registered since 1 April 2002.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). This is 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 GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

We carried out a site visit to the service on 20 August 2021 and completed the inspection using telephone calls, virtual meetings, and the submission of documents. Feedback was given on 2 September 2021.

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 under the theme of 'Quality of care and support'.

This inspection was carried out by inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

What people told us

We were provided with comments from five parents/carers. Parents were very supportive of the nursery and spoke positively about the management, staff, and the care given to their children. There were positive comments on Covid-19 and how this was managed. One parent said they enjoyed the recent stay and play sessions in the garden. Parent comments included:

- "We are content with the current provision. We specifically like the fact that one of the key carers is male and he seems to be adored by all the children. We like the variety of activities that are offered and the learning opportunities. Our child has been encouraged to be inquisitive, especially in relation to learning about insects which they love."
- "I can only praise the nursery for what they have been doing and how they have dealt with everything during the last 18 months."
- "The nursery have been fantastic. My child only attends part-time but they are always excited when a Tuesday comes round and their nursery week starts again. After the strangeness of the last year that is such a relief and I take my hat off to the staff who make his days enjoyable."
- "We really like the staff and our child really likes it there. The location is also fantastic for us and they were also accommodating when it came to times to pick them up or for appointments."

The children appeared happy and settled and enjoyed their lunch. Some children were able to relax and sleep indoors, while other children went outside to play.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their quality assurance processes and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and staff. Children were well supported with handwashing at key times during the day and staff understood and implemented the new arrangements for cleaning within the service.

Opportunities for outdoor play had increased during the pandemic, helping to keep everyone safe and well. Changes as to how the indoor spaces were used supported good ventilation and airflow.

Some minor areas were identified for improvement. These included decluttering the worksurface and sink area in the two to five lunch room and ensuring paper towels were stored in a dispenser or other suitable container in the zero to two area. We also suggested bins used for paper towels do not have lids to help prevent the risk of infection when opening.

Children were supported by kind and helpful staff. We observed lovely interactions from staff when supporting children with their personal needs. This meant children felt comfortable and at ease and could be heard laughing and giggling.

Babies were comforted with soothing voices and gentle interactions. Some babies were soothed to sleep with gentle strokes to the forehead and hands. Staff were able to identify when children were unable to sleep and were responsive to that, supporting quiet activities instead.

Settling-in procedures were individualised and helped children settle quickly. This included a garden visit, discussions around a support plan, and a build-up of hours of attendance.

Lunches were nutritious and children were able to take their time and eat lunch in a very unhurried manner. Children were encouraged to wash their hands and sat in friendship groups which helped develop their social skills. We observed very caring interactions where children were supported to cut up their food and independently use a fork and knife. Younger children were supported with feeding, where this was required.

There had been significant improvement in the quality and quantity of recording of children's information within their personal plans. The information was easy to find, was current and up to date, and included details from parents and other agencies. This meant staff were well informed on how best to meet children's individual needs and contributed to good outcomes for children.

Planning for learning was responsive to children's needs and individual learning and development. Ongoing training and development in using observations of the children at play meant staff were more able to plan activities and resources to help children achieve and progress. We discussed ensuring planning, learning, and assessment approaches continue to be reviewed and monitored. This will help ensure practices are sustained and children continue to receive good quality learning experiences.

Systems and procedures supported the safe administration of medication to help keep children safe and well.

Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Chronologies were used to record significant events in a child's life and the relevant authorities had been contacted, when needed. Some staff were able to discuss the challenges and impact on families during Covid-19. However, more discussion and training in this area would be beneficial.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The environment looked clean and fresh and enhanced cleaning procedures reduced the risk of transmission of infection. The building was well ventilated with open doors and windows to increase airflow and help keep everyone safe and well.

Some very positive changes had been made to the indoor spaces. The baby room looked spacious and welcoming and the removal of the partition between the kitchen area and the playroom meant children could more easily access messy activities. There were black and white pictures and mirrors to engage and support development through visual sensory experiences. Consideration had been given to what babies see when crawling and playing on the floor and attractive laminated pictures, baubles, and Christmas decorations were suspended from the ceiling. The removal of cupboard doors made the playrooms look more inviting and enabled children to choose toys independently. Wall displays were attractive and displayed children's artwork.

The new toilets in the two to five area were very fresh, bright, and clean. The clever use of a pull out/swing door supported children's dignity and privacy during nappy changing and when they were supported with their personal care.

The reconfiguration of spaces accessed by the older children made access to the toilets easier and as restrictions ease will support free-flow play between indoors and outdoors. We discussed ways to further enhance this space by considering how best to combine its use as both a play area and snack/lunch space.

Children were able to sleep in the playroom and the use of blinds and curtains helped make this a relaxing space. Travel cots were available to support babies' safety and comfort. Bed linen was washed frequently and kept for individual children to help reduce the risk of infection through cross contamination.

The children enjoyed being outside for the majority of the session. A portable sink was available to support regular handwashing outside and help reduce the risk of infection through cross contamination. The two to five year olds were able to play with a variety of resources to support their creativity, imagination, and physical development. This included a climbing frame, drawing area, and mud kitchen. The babies were supported by staff in a smaller, partitioned area of the outdoor space. They were very happy and engaged. However, they would benefit from the addition of more sensory and creative play.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Induction processes meant new staff were aware of policies and procedures to keep children safe. An induction record was regularly updated to ensure they were becoming more able and confident in their role. New staff were supported by management and experienced team members during induction periods to help develop their knowledge and skills.

Parents told us that staffing had been consistent with few recent changes. This helped children form positive attachments to staff, helping them to feel more confident and able to ask for help, support, and comfort. Parents felt staff were very approachable and friendly and knew their child well. This supported a continuity of care and promoted working together to meet children's needs.

Staff worked well together as a team and used good communication skills to ensure children were provided with the support they needed. Room leaders ably directed staff to support the smooth running of the day. This was evident during lunch which was well organised and a positive experience. This contributed to a positive ethos and very good outcomes for children.

Staff had undertaken a variety of training to support their knowledge and skills. During Covid-19 they had been kept informed with updated guidance, policies, and procedures. This was reflected in their good practice, in areas such as physically distancing, enhanced cleaning, and handwashing. They were knowledgeable in the Covid-19 risk assessment which was updated and current. Some staff were in the process of or had obtained a qualification in childcare. They were able to discuss how this contributed to providing individualised care and support that helped children achieve. Online training helped staff develop their knowledge and skills in infection control, child protection, and child development.

Training to further develop staff's knowledge in planning, teaching, and assessment was ongoing. Staff spoke positively about the impact of this on their practice and how they felt more confident in supporting children's learning. As a result, we observed children were happy and interested with the activities on offer. There were some missed opportunities to sustain children's play and develop their thinking, however management advised continued support and development would be provided.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The service had reviewed their management structure and their role and responsibilities. This meant senior management were able to review, assess, and make positive changes to the service. This contributed to a positive ethos and improved outcomes for children.

Parents told us they felt very confident in the nursery and its provision. They felt the managers of the service were welcoming and approachable. During Covid-19, the service continued to communicate with parents using email. Parents shared that email and daily chats were used to support communication, sharing of information, and children's learning. Parental feedback had been sought and used to make changes and support improvement. This was evident in menu choices and how parents felt about the setting.

During Covid-19, staff were provided with support, help, and communication. This helped them cope with any anxieties and challenges as a result of the pandemic.

The managers of the service worked well together to ensure the day to day running of the service and also to support improvement. They had made changes to the service provision to help ensure children, staff, and their families were kept safe and well during Covid-19. They continued to update their risk assessment and access updated guidance. This meant staff felt confident coming to work and that parents were reassured their child was safe.

Very good leadership within the rooms led to very good outcomes for children. Senior staff organised the day and communicated well with colleagues to ensure children's needs were fully met.

The management team had reviewed policies, systems, and procedures to improve outcomes for children. This included reviewing children's personal plans. They contained relevant information, were accessible, and fully supported children's needs. Parents and staff discussed how these positive changes helped significantly improve the individualised support given to children.

Improved ways of monitoring the service provided had helped identify areas where changes could be made. This was evident in changes made to the environment, improved staff interactions, and children's learning experiences.

The service was beginning to implement the quality framework and was in the early stages of using the document as a self evaluation tool.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very 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.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

To ensure children are challenged in their learning and supported to achieve, the managers and staff should improve how staff observe and assess the development and learning of each child and use this assessment information to effectively plan for children's learning and development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me" (HSCS 1.27).

This recommendation was made on 17 February 2020.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Planning for learning was responsive to children's needs and individual learning and development. Ongoing training and development in using observations of the children at play meant staff were more able to plan activities and resources to help children achieve and progress.

This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 2

In order to ensure children receive the right support to meet their care and wellbeing needs and reach their potential, systems in place for assuring quality need to be further developed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "As a child I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having a robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19).

This recommendation was made on 17 February 2020.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Improved ways of monitoring the service provided had helped identify areas where changes could be made. This was evident in changes made to the environment, improved staff interactions, and children's learning experiences. The management team had reviewed policies, systems, and procedures to improve outcomes for children. Regular audits of accidents and incidents, medication stored on the premises, daily cleaning, and staff practice were undertaken. They were beginning to implement the quality framework and were in the early stages of using the document as a self evaluation tool.

This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 3

To achieve the best possible outcomes for children, the managers and staff must ensure that detailed personal plans are developed and implemented to reflect children's current needs and provide clear guidance for staff on how they will effectively meet each child's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My personal 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).

This recommendation was made on 17 February 2020.

Action taken on previous recommendation

There had been significant improvement in the quality and quantity of recording of children's information within their personal plans. The information was easy to find, was current and up to date, and included information from parents and other agencies. This meant staff were well informed on how best to meet children's individual needs.

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

Date	Type	Gradings
9 Jan 2020	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
17 Jan 2019	Unannounced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment 2 - Weak Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
27 Oct 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership Not assessed
15 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
21 Dec 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
19 Nov 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
26 Feb 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership Not assessed
30 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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