

Banff Playgroup Day Care of Children

Deveron Sports and Community Centre
Bellevue Road
Banff
AB44 1UD

Telephone: 07542 177 122

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 December 2021

Service provided by:
Banff Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003000414

Service no:
CS2003002537

About the service

Banff Playgroup is a day care of children service and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children from the age of two years to not yet attending primary school.

The playgroup is accommodated within Deveron Sports and Community Centre. There is a large playroom with direct access to an outdoor balcony, integral toilets, and a kitchen area.

Aims of the service include being committed to "provide a warm, welcoming, safe, and stimulating environment with a range of well planned experiences and opportunities for children".

The service has been registered since 1 April 2002.

We carried out site visits to the service on 23 November 2021 and 2 December 2021. Feedback was given on 2 December 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 an inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

What people told us

We were provided with comments from three parents. Overall, they were supportive of the playgroup and told us their children enjoyed attending. However, parents were unable to provide us with details about the service provision. Their comments included:

- "What a fantastic job all the staff do to meet our children's needs each day. As a parent, it can be hard leaving them but I've always felt so at ease and happy that I chose for my child to attend Banff Playgroup."
- "I can see my child is well looked after and enjoys playgroup as they repeat some of the activities that they have enjoyed at home."

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 found these were not effective in supporting improvement to the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	2 - Weak
Quality of environment	2 - Weak
Quality of staffing	2 - Weak

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We identified significant areas of concern in respect of infection prevention and control practices to support a safe environment for children and staff. This included limited staff training and understanding, and the general cleanliness of the environment. We have, therefore, reported on these areas within the 'Quality of staffing' and the 'Quality of environment' themes.

We made an evaluation of weak for this theme. Whilst some strengths could be identified, these were compromised by significant weaknesses.

Children enjoyed an unhurried, peaceful snack and lunchtime experience. They were given a nutritious snack and packed lunches provided by parents meant children had a meal. However, there were concerns around the infection prevention and control practices during mealtimes (see 'Quality of environment', requirement 1).

Not all interactions with children were kind, loving, and compassionate. Some children were not given the comfort they needed when distressed or upset. Children were not always appropriately supported to play safely or responsibly, potentially putting them at risk of injury (see 'Quality of staffing', requirement 1).

Staff were unaware of the information recorded in children's personal plans. The information had not been updated to reflect children's changing needs and other professionals had not been contacted or involved to fully support children's health and wellbeing. As a result, some children were not provided with the help and support they needed to flourish and achieve their full potential. The manager advised children's personal plans were to be reviewed as a priority (**see requirement 1**).

Observations of children at play were not used effectively to help plan activities and resources to support children's learning and development. The service recognised this was an area that required development and advised support from the local authority would be ongoing.

Not all staff were confident and competent in safeguarding children. The child protection officer was new to the role and had not undertaken further training to develop their knowledge and skills. Not all staff had undertaken child protection training and were not able to discuss possible signs of concern. Information recorded in children's chronologies had not always been updated when support had been provided (**see requirement 2**).

Information was available to ensure staff were fully aware of children with allergies, food intolerances, or other medical conditions. This helped keep children safe and well. However, lifesaving medication kept on the premises was not stored safely. We provided the setting with the guidance 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' and immediate action was taken.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 2

1. By 10 January 2022, the provider must ensure children's personal plans contain relevant and up to date information and that staff are aware of and use this to meet children's needs, wishes, and choices.

This is to comply with Regulation 5(1) (Personal Plans) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, and well maintained premises, furnishings, and equipment" (HSCS 5.22).

2. By 10 January 2022, the provider must ensure the manager and staff have the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to protect children from harm, appropriate for the role in which they are employed.

To achieve this, the provider must ensure:

a) The manager and staff are competent in and knowledgeable about national, local, and the service's own child protection procedures and 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC).

b) The manager and staff are competent in completing chronologies and use these to ensure appropriate action is taken to support children and their families .

c) Effective procedures to assess the manager and staff competency of child protection and GIRFEC are implemented and used on an ongoing basis.

This is to comply with with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users), Regulation 7(2)(c) (Fitness of managers), and Regulation 9(2)(b) (Fitness of employees) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying, and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities" (HSCS 3.20).

The provider, manager, and staff may find the following documents useful to support them in meeting this requirement:

'National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021'
(<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/>)

'Practice guide to Chronologies'
(<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1581/practice-guide-to-chronologies-2017.pdf>)

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 2 - weak

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We made an evaluation of weak for this theme. Whilst some strengths could be identified, these were compromised by significant weaknesses. As these weaknesses concerned the welfare and safety of children and young people, we made a requirement for improvement as part of a serious concern letter during inspection.

The nursery was not hygienic, clean, and safe for play and learning. Touch points, such as door handles and the children's thermometer, were visibly dirty and were not cleaned during the session. Resources and furnishings, including the house corner, writing resources, and the glass doors, were visibly dirty. A swing bin was used in the snack area and the lid was dirty. This increased the risk of transmission of infection when opening the bins using hands.

The floors and chairs in the snack and lunch areas were dirty. Children's snack was served from the sink area within immediate proximity to the handwashing sinks. This increased the risk of cross contamination. Packed lunch boxes taken from home were stored in a cool box and these were then transferred to the tables. As well as increasing the risk of infection, there was reduced space for children to set out their lunch in an organised, well presented manner.

An open box of washing powder was stored in the nappy changing room and some of the contents was spilt on the floor. This was within children's reach, potentially putting them at risk of harm. Outdoor fences with protruding screws were stored in the playroom. Outdoor equipment and fencing were also stored in the toilets, limiting their use by the children and presenting a risk to the children. Paper towels were not stored in dispensers in the playroom or in the toilets. A roll of paper for drying hands was left in a puddle of water in the sink area. A broken slab in the outdoor area restricted the opportunities for play outside and did not support children's fitness, health, and wellbeing.

As a result, we issued a serious concern letter on 23 November 2021 with the following requirement:

To ensure children's health and safety, the provider and manager must, by Wednesday 24 November 2021, ensure the nursery environment, equipment, and resources are appropriate, hygienic, and safe.

We returned to the service on 2 December 2021 and we assessed that the requirement had been met.

The service had closed to allow staff time to clean and organise the environment and the playroom looked fresh, clean, and tidy. The handwashing sink was clean and paper towels were stored in dispensers easily accessible to the children. The service was waiting for delivery of a new pedal bin but, as an interim measure, had removed the lid of the old and used this for paper towels only. All surfaces had been thoroughly cleaned, including touch points on the doors and windows.

The sink area was clean prior to lunch and all tables and chairs were cleaned before and after eating. Snack was no longer served from the sink worktop and the use of a second table kept food items germ free and safe from water splashes. Changes to the lunch routine meant children no longer ate straight from their lunch box on the table, promoting a more pleasing and safer environment.

The playroom and adjoining toilets were no longer used as storage areas and had been cleared of unnecessary and dangerous items. Staff were now able to use the toilets for nappy changing, resulting in a safer laundry area, free from contamination and risk of infection.

Significant changes had been made to the role play and story areas. Old resources had been removed and they now looked more inviting and engaging. We discussed continuing to develop the play experiences for children with more opportunities to develop their curiosity and creativity through imaginative play (**see recommendation 1**).

Children were not able to access outdoor play at the time of inspection. The balcony was unsafe due to the inclement weather conditions and damage to the stone surface. The manager advised they were discussing the possibility of accessing an outdoor area within the adjoining school. To support children's health and wellbeing and to reduce the risk of infection for Covid-19, daily opportunities for outdoor play should be available (**see requirement 1**).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. By 10 January 2022, the provider must ensure children are able to play outdoors every day with regular opportunities to explore a natural environment.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) and Regulation 10(2)(d) (Fitness of premises) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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 play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment" (HSCS 1.32).

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. To support children progress and achieve, the provider should ensure children are able to experience a range of activities and resources which stimulate their curiosity, imagination, and creativity.

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 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).

The following documents should be used to support this:

'My World Outdoors' and 'My Creative Journey'
(www.thehub.careinspectorate.com)

'The Loose Parts Toolkit'
(<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/405223/loose-parts-play-toolkit.pdf>)

Grade: 2 - weak

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We made an evaluation of weak for this key question. Whilst we identified some strengths, these were compromised by significant weaknesses. As these weaknesses concerned the welfare and safety of children, we made a requirement for improvement as part of a serious concern letter during inspection.

Infection prevention and control practice was poor and guidance was not followed by staff, increasing the risk of transmission of infection. The environment was visibly dirty and had not been thoroughly cleaned at the beginning or end of session. This put children at risk of harm.

As a result, we issued a serious concern letter on 23 November 2021 with the following requirement:

In order to ensure children's safety, health, and wellbeing, the provider and manager must, by Wednesday 24 November 2021, ensure that staff are knowledgeable, competent, and effectively implement infection prevention and control practices.

We returned to the service on 2 December 2021 and assessed that this requirement had been met.

The temporary closure of the service had enabled staff to access some training materials to support their understanding of Covid-19 and in keeping children and their families safe and free from infection. We observed children were supported in handwashing and the environment was much cleaner and more inviting.

Some staff were enthusiastic and excited by the changes made to the environment. Training in how best to provide an enabling environment was ongoing and they had accessed a range of training materials to develop their knowledge and understanding of childcare. However, this was not evident in their practice. We suggested they research and further develop play areas relevant to their strengths and interests. Ongoing discussion, team meetings, and support from the local authority in all areas of practice would be beneficial to support staff skills and knowledge. New guidance, such as the draft Quality Framework and 'Realising the Ambition', should be accessed to support staff knowledge **(see recommendation 1)**.

Staff interactions with children were of mixed quality. Some staff did not provide children with loving, caring interactions that boosted children's confidence and develop self esteem. Some negative language was used by some staff, discouraging children from making informed choices and decisions. Some staff did not recognise when children required support and help and did not provide compassionate and responsive care. Children were not supported to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviours **(see requirement 1)**.

We were unable to ascertain if staff had been safely recruited and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Induction processes were not effective to ensure staff were aware of policies and procedures to keep children safe. We discussed ensuring new staff were given the appropriate support and guidance to develop their knowledge and skills **(see requirement 2)**.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 2

1. By 10 January 2022, the provider must ensure all staff treat children with respect and compassion to help children feel safe, secure, and supported to grow in confidence.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people's attention" (HSCS 3.1) and "I experience warmth, kindness, and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting and caring for me" (HSCS 3.9).

2. By 10 January 2022, the provider must ensure all staff have been appropriately and safely recruited and new staff are supported with a robust and supportive induction programme.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people's attention" (HSCS 3.1) and "I experience warmth, kindness, and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting and caring for me" (HSCS 3.9).

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1.
To ensure children receive high quality early learning and childcare, are kept safe, and their wellbeing needs are met, the provider should ensure staff are effectively supported to develop the skills and knowledge needed for their role.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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: 2 - weak

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We made an evaluation of weak for this theme. Whilst we identified some strengths, these were compromised by significant weaknesses.

Parents spoke very positively about the service and felt their child was happy to attend. They enjoyed receiving photographs and received regular updates about their child in their learning journal. However, there was little evidence of planned or structured engagement with families to support their child's learning. As a result, opportunities to plan early intervention support were missed. Parents did not feel very informed about changes to the service provision, such as unexpected closures (**see recommendation 1**).

The service was provided by a committee who were new to the role. They were committed to support the service make improvements and had authorised the purchase of new resources and materials. They were working closely with the manager to create an action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children. This included a review of the policies and procedures and risk assessments of the environment.

The manager of the service was very friendly, approachable, and wanted to improve the experiences for the children. However, they were very new to the role and lacked the support from an established provider. This meant they did not have the skills and experience to provide effective leadership in the setting (**see requirement 1**).

Quality assurance systems were not effective to enable the setting to deliver high quality care and support towards children and their families. Inconsistencies in staff practice had been identified, however action had not been taken to address the concerns. Poor infection control procedures had not been addressed, potentially putting staff and children at risk. We discussed ensuring monitoring of service provision and staff practice are implemented as a matter of urgency. This will help drive and sustain improvement (**see recommendation 2**).

Self evaluation was not evident and should be implemented to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Guidance to support self evaluation can be found at: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/how-we-support-improvement/care-inspectorate-programmes-and-publications/early-learning-and-childcare-improvement-programme/>.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. By 10 January 2022, the provider must ensure that the service is well led by a competent and skilled manager. To do this, the provider must ensure the manager develops their skills in leadership and makes improvements to the quality of children's experiences.

The Scottish Social Services Council's 'Step into Leadership' resources should be accessed to support this (<https://www.stepintoleadership.info/>).

This is to comply with Regulation 7(2)(c) (Fitness of managers) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI/2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (HSCS 4.23).

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The provider and manager should ensure families are fully informed of nursery practices, involved in their child's learning and development, and supported to give regular feedback on the service.

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 give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve" (HSCS 4.8).

2. To improve and sustain good outcomes for children, the provider and manager should undertake robust and meaningful quality assurance and ensure they are effective and lead to improvements.

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

Grade: 2 - weak

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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

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
4 May 2018	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
19 Apr 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
8 May 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
12 May 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
11 Jun 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and leadership 2 - Weak

Date	Type	Gradings	
1 Sep 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed
10 Jan 2011	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good
27 Mar 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate

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