

Junior World Day Care of Children

Millbank Annexe
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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Service provided by:
CALA Integrated Services

Service provider number:
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About the service

Junior World operates from portable ageing accommodation maintained by Highland Council, close to Millbank Primary School in Nairn. They provide early learning and childcare and out of school facilities for up to 80 children aged between two and 16 years. The service is operated by the Care and Learning Alliance. The service operates Monday to Friday all year round.

The early learning and childcare facilities and out of school care service operate from four rooms which have direct access to outdoor space. There are toilets, a kitchen, office space and access to a large, outdoor, grassy area adjacent to the premises where children can play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 24 January 2023 and 25 January 2023. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with children using the service;
- reviewed feedback from five families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children did not always receive the nurturing care and support necessary to meet their needs and support their overall wellbeing.
- In the out of school service, staff were nurturing and responsive to the needs of children which supported them to feel valued and included.
- Opportunities to develop literacy, language and numeracy within the learning environment were limited.
- Children did not experience an environment which was homely, well cared for and welcoming.
- Children were put at risk as quality assurance processes were ineffective.
- Staff deployment within the nursery did not always meet the needs of individual children.

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, play and learning?	2 - Weak
How good is our setting?	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our leadership?	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our staff team?	1 - Unsatisfactory

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

2 - Weak

We evaluated this quality theme as weak. Strengths were identified but these were outweighed or compromised by significant weaknesses. The weaknesses, either individually or when added together, substantially affected children's experiences or outcomes.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Across both nursery playrooms children did not always experience warm and caring interactions. At regular times during the day, staff were not attuned to children's needs and did not recognise times when children required support and attention. For example, there were occasions where disengaged children actively sought support from an adult and this was not noticed, acknowledged or acted upon by staff. As a result, children did not always receive the nurturing care and support necessary to meet their needs and support their overall wellbeing (see area for improvement 3). In the out of school provision there were stronger relationships between the children and staff. Staff were nurturing and responsive to the needs of children which supported them to feel valued and included.

Children's needs were not being consistently met. Support strategies identified to help children were not being used or were not in place at all. Personal planning information was not being used effectively and was not always meeting children's individual needs. For example, strategies to support several children with the development of their confidence, communication and language were not evident in practice. Strategies to support safety during mealtimes for some children were not being followed. As a result, children did not always receive the correct care and support to meet their individual needs and keep them safe (see requirement 1).

Effective infection control measures were not always implemented by staff. Children were not always supported to wash their hands at appropriate times, for example after going to the toilet and after finishing snack. The water temperature in the nursery rooms did not always reach a warm state which negatively impacted the effectiveness of handwashing. This had the potential to increase the spread of infection (see area for improvement 1). We referred the manager to best practice guidance to support effective infection prevention and control 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings)'.

Snack and lunchtimes provided very limited opportunities for children to develop their independence skills. Some nursery children were involved in the preparation of snack and there were limited opportunities for children to self-serve snack items and pour their own milk. In the out of school provision, children had the opportunity to plan their own snack choices, but they were not involved in the preparation of snack. This did not support children to develop a sense of responsibility and develop skills for life. In the nursery areas, staff were task focused during snack and mealtimes, this was especially evident at lunchtime. As a result, there were missed opportunities to engage with and support children to make it a more sociable experience. This did not provide children with a relaxed, sociable and enjoyable mealtime experience (see area for improvement 2).

Children were offered healthy and nutritious food choices at snack and lunchtimes. However, at these times, children used their own plastic bottles for a drink. Several of these bottles contained juice which did not support good dental hygiene or access to fresh water. We spoke with the manager about ensuring that fresh water was available and easily accessible for children throughout the day. We signposted the Care Inspectorate practice note: 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)' to support the service with their review of the snack and mealtime experiences (see area for improvement 2).

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were able to free flow between indoors and outdoors. This meant children had opportunities to lead their own play and were observed to be having fun, which was more evident within the outdoor areas of the nursery. As a result, children were supported to make choices as to where and how they wanted to play.

Staff did not use information effectively to enable them to respond and plan appropriately to meet children's individual needs, including additional supports where these were required. Planning approaches were not focused on or responsive to children's interests. When children were asked about their learning experiences, staff missed opportunities to build on their interests and challenge them. Observations of learning within children's profiles did not consistently or clearly show progression or next steps. Opportunities to develop literacy, language and numeracy within the learning environment were limited and staff did not take opportunities during children's day to day play experiences to develop these skills. A 'Rhyme of the Week' had been implemented by the staff team but this was not being consolidated and revisited with the children through their play. This resulted in many children not being fully supported to reach their potential and develop lifelong skills. We signposted the manager to the guidance document: 'Realising the ambition: Being Me National practice guidance for early years in Scotland', which has further information to support the service review its observation, planning and assessment cycle.

In the nursery areas, some children had opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity. For example, in the outdoor area a few children used loose parts to create an obstacle course which they had fun navigating and exploring. However, children had too few opportunities to be actively involved in leading their play and learning which limited their choice and creativity.

Children's play was frequently interrupted throughout the day to follow routines and adult directed activities. Staff interactions were not always effective in engaging or supporting children's learning through skilled, open-ended questioning. Some staff missed cues from children to engage them in their play and learning experiences. This then led to children becoming disengaged and wandering off to look for something else to do and, on some occasions, this led to boisterous and disruptive behaviour from children. As a result, children were not supported to develop core skills through their play and learning experiences (see area for improvement 3).

Out of school provision offered a range of opportunities for children to lead their own play and learning. Children's experiences here were enhanced through strong connections to their local community. For example, children had recently visited a new enterprise to purchase snack ingredients and made regular visits to the local library. As a result, children were supported to develop lifelong skills.

Requirements

1. By 18 April 2023, the provider must ensure that children's individual needs are consistently met. At a minimum, the provider must ensure that:

- a) personal plans set out clear strategies which support children's current needs and how they will be met;
- b) all staff are aware of and understand the information within the personal plans and use this to effectively meet each child's needs; and
- c) personal plans are regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with parents.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) and Regulation 5 of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 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:

'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).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider, manager and staff should review current infection control procedures. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) effective staff supervision of children's hand washing; and
- b) ensuring warm water is always available for handwashing.

This to ensure that 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).

2. To support children's wellbeing, the provider, manager and staff should review and improve the snack and mealtime experiences. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) promoting opportunities for developing children's independence and language skills;
- b) reviewing and improving staff deployment and practice to support children during snack and mealtimes; and
- c) ensuring all children have access to fresh water.

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

'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.' (HSCS 1.35); and
'I can drink fresh water at all times.' (HSCS 1.39).

3. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure staff access training and development opportunities appropriate to their role, and apply this in practice. This should include, but is not limited to training in:

- a) effective observations and planning;
- b) quality interactions; and
- c) child-led play.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (JSCS) 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).

How good is our setting?

1 - Unsatisfactory

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality theme as unsatisfactory. There were major weaknesses in critical aspects of practice which required immediate remedial action to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of children.

The nursery playrooms and out of school care spaces benefited from plenty of natural light and ventilation. Some children benefited from free-flow access to the outdoors from their rooms which supported their health and wellbeing.

The nursery rooms looked neglected, and this did not create a warm or welcoming feel for children. Poor quality furnishings, dated and worn decoration, dirty windows and a lack of homely touches all contributed to an environment which felt unloved. This did not give a warm and welcoming feel for children or give the message that they mattered.

Children did not experience a range of rich, stimulating play resources to support and develop their learning. The provision across the nursery playrooms was not always developmentally appropriate and did not provide enough opportunities for children to develop key skills in understanding, thinking, investigating and problem solving. There was a lack of open ended and loose parts across the nursery playrooms which limited children's opportunities for curiosity, creativity and inquiry. Many areas of the nursery were not well resourced. For example, the home corner in the blue room was sparse and did not have enough objects to engage children in imaginative play. The dressing up resources were poorly presented which meant the children could not see what was available to use for play. Children had very limited access to books and other text within the nursery and there was a shortage of quality resources across the nursery to support children's numeracy development. As a result, children in nursery did not receive experiences which supported the development of their language, literacy and numeracy (see area for improvement 1).

Children in the nursery playrooms did not have access to cosy spaces to give opportunities for quiet or rest time. The cosy area in the blue room was not well positioned, was poorly resourced and the room was often noisy and chaotic. As a result children in nursery were unable to rest and relax in a nurturing and comfortable environment. In out of school care, children made good use of furniture provided to rest and relax, although some items were not in a good state of repair (see area for improvement 1).

The arrangements for monitoring maintenance and repair of the setting were not sufficient to ensure repairs were carried out without delay. Several radiators were examined during the inspection and some of the covers were not secure. Some of the radiators were extremely hot, with covers which were too small. The small covers created spaces where children's fingers could pass through. This created the potential for children to scald their skin and presented a high risk to their safety. We made a requirement around the safety of radiator covers during our last inspection which has not been met and will therefore be continued (see requirement 1). Daily checks of the environment did not identify the serious risk posed to children from blind cords hanging loose. We raised this issue with the manager during the inspection and the service took immediate steps to ensure all blind cords were secured.

At our inspection of the above service on 24 and 25 January 2023 we identified and discussed with the manager and operations manager some serious concerns we had around children's safety. These were regarding the risk of children leaving the service without a responsible adult and the risk of strangers being able to enter the premises. We issued the service with a serious concern letter with a requirement to ensure that children were kept safe. This included ensuring the premises was safe and secure at all times and children were effectively supervised. We carried out a further visit to the service on 31 January 2023 and found significant improvements had been made to meet this requirement (see requirement 2).

Requirements

1. By 8 February 2023, to ensure the safety of children, the provider needs to ensure that children cannot access hot radiators.

Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011 No. 210 - 10(2)(b) Fitness of Premises - premises are not fit to be used for the provision of a care service unless they - are of sound construction and kept in a good state of repair externally and internally.

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

'My environment is safe and secure'. (HSCS 5.17).

2. By 30 January 2023, the provider must ensure that children are kept safe by implementing effective systems to prevent children leaving the service without a responsible adult and prevent strangers from entering. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring the premises are secure at all times;
- b) ensuring children are effectively supervised at all times; and
- c) reviewing the risk presented to children by the gate in the front garden of the after school club and making necessary changes.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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

'My environment is safe and secure'. (HSCS 5.17).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children to access well-resourced play areas and experiences which support and extend learning, the provider, manager and staff should review the play and learning resources available to children. This should include, but is not limited to developing the environment to include:

- a) resources which support language, literacy and numeracy;
- b) a range of resources which support children's imagination and curiosity which include loose parts, natural and open-ended play resources; and
- c) cosy areas that support children to rest and relax.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards 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).

How good is our leadership?

1 - Unsatisfactory

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality theme as unsatisfactory. There were major weaknesses in critical aspects of practice which required immediate remedial action to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of children.

Robust quality assurance systems were not in place. For example, monitoring of the environment did not identify clear safety issues such as children being able to leave the service without an adult. This placed children at the potential risk of harm as safety and poor practice was not being identified. The manager was not effectively and accurately reviewing practice to identify strengths and further areas for improvement within the setting. This resulted in significant gaps in service delivery which impacted negatively on the quality of experiences children received (see requirement 1).

Effective arrangements were not in place to ensure the service was well managed and led. The manager was not confident in their role to support and develop the staff team. Some support and supervision for the new manager had taken place. However, this was not always focussed on aspects of leading the service which made a positive impact on the experiences for children. We spoke with the operations manager and offered suggestions for ways in which the service manager could be better supported. This included assigning mentoring support for the manager which was put in place during the course of the inspection process. We also signposted the 'Step into Leadership' resources from the Scottish Social Services Council (see area for improvement 1).

The service improvement plan identified priority areas for development however, it was not being used effectively to support positive change in the quality of the service for children and families. Appropriate systems were not in place to identify, monitor and review the impact of improvements. The service should now review their self-evaluation processes and put systems in place to meaningfully evaluate and measure progress (see area for improvement 2).

Families were not meaningfully involved in the development of the service. Families were provided with some opportunities to give feedback. For example, they were asked about their own and their children's experiences of the service. Most families told us they were happy with the care and support their child received. However, there was no evidence that families had been involved in giving feedback to inform the development of the service.

The provider and manager welcomed the inspection to help assist with the implementation of change and to address the significant areas of concern identified throughout this inspection.

Requirements

1. By 2 May 2023, to improve outcomes for children and ensure they are safe, the provider must develop and implement an effective system of quality assurance to monitor and improve practice. At a minimum, the provider must:

- a) carry out effective monitoring including staff practice, quality of children's experiences and children's safety within the service; and
- b) implement effective action planning to address areas of required improvements within identified timescales.

This is to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210 - Regulation 3 Principles.

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)

Areas for improvement

1. To support the effective development of the service, the provider should ensure the manager has the skills, knowledge and expertise required to carry out their role. This should include, but is not limited to ensuring:

- a) training and support is put in place to address the identified professional developmental needs of the manager; and
- b) effective systems are in place to ensure the manager is confident in their role in relation to monitoring and reviewing all aspects of the service.

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).

2. To support the effective development of the service and improve children's experiences, the provider should ensure effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are developed. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) developing clear and effective plans to maintain and improve the service; and
- b) ensuring effective systems are in place to identify, monitor and review the impact of improvements.

This is 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, the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.23).

How good is our staff team?

1 - Unsatisfactory

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality theme as unsatisfactory. There were major weaknesses in critical aspects of practice which required immediate remedial action to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of children.

Communication and team working between nursery staff was limited, leading to gaps in supervision across the day which compromised the safety of children. There was a lack of awareness of the need to effectively deploy staff within the service. Staff in the playrooms did not take responsibility for highlighting gaps in staffing and opportunities to improve the experiences for the children were missed. For example, children were not adequately supervised and supported to resolve conflicts and children were left unsupervised whilst eating. This led to serious risks to children's safety and well-being and did not support best practice around minimising the risks of choking (see requirement 1).

Staff deployment within the nursery did not always meet the needs of individual children. Consideration had not been given to the layout of the environment, the use of spaces and the skills, experiences and knowledge of staff working with individual children. This led to frequent missed opportunities to support high quality play and learning experiences. For example, we observed children disengaged from play experiences for prolonged periods of time. Staff lacked the awareness to notice and positively interact with children at these times. As a result children were not being fully supported to reach their potential (see area for improvement 1).

A lack of leadership in the nursery playrooms led to inconsistencies in care and support provided to children. A senior practitioner position was vacant at the time of the inspection. The manager spoke about the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff who were experienced and qualified. The provider was currently reviewing their recruitment procedures to ensure appropriate qualified and experienced staff were appointed moving forward.

Requirements

1. By 7 February 2023, the provider must ensure children are safe and effectively supervised at all times. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

- a) sufficient numbers of staff are deployed within the nursery as is appropriate to effectively and consistently meet the health, wellbeing, welfare and safety of children; and
- b) staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are appropriately supervised and kept safe at all times.

This is to comply with Regulations 4(1)(a) and 15(a) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210) (Requirements for Care Services)

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); and
'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children are supported by staff with the right skills, knowledge and experience, the provider should review and make changes to staffing which include but are not limited to:

- a) reviewing the balance of skills, knowledge and experience of staff across the service and make appropriate changes to improve experiences for children; and
- b) reviewing the professional development needs of staff across the service to support staff to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

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).

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

It is a requirement that all radiator covers are fixed to the wall.

Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011 No. 210 - 10(2)(b) Fitness of Premises - premises are not fit to be used for the provision of a care service unless they are of sound construction and kept in a good state of repair externally and internally.

This requirement was made on 30 January 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service has taken action to install covers to the radiators. However, some of these covers were too small and not fit for purpose and some were not effectively fixed to the wall. This presented a risk to children's safety. Therefore this requirement has not been met and has been reinstated in this report.

Not met

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	2 - Weak
1.1 Nurturing care and support	2 - Weak
1.3 Play and learning	2 - Weak
How good is our setting?	1 - Unsatisfactory
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our leadership?	1 - Unsatisfactory
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our staff team?	1 - Unsatisfactory
4.3 Staff deployment	1 - Unsatisfactory

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