

Swansacre Playgroup Day Care of Children

21-23 Swansacre
Kinross
KY13 8TE

Telephone: 01577 862 071

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 February 2023

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

Service provider number:
SP2016012722

Service no:
CS2016347300

About the service

Swansacre Playgroup is provided by a voluntary management committee who have overall responsibility for the service. The service 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.

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 in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council and provides funded places.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2 February 2023 between 09:30 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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:

- spoke with six people using the service and two of their family members
- spoke with four staff and the manager
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff were skilled at when and how to interact with children which supported them to receive care that was nurturing and sensitive.
- Personal planning was effective in ensuring children's individual needs were met.
- Families and other professionals were positively involved in planning children's care.
- Children were encouraged to be independent and responsible at mealtimes.
- Children's language and literacy skills were well supported through word aware strategies.
- There were missed opportunities to support children's skills in numeracy.
- The service could enhance children's opportunities for free flow play to the outdoor area.
- The service had made considerable progress since the last inspection in quality assurance processes which impacted positively on service developments.
- Staff were supportive, sensitive, kind and caring in their approach towards children.
- The staff team worked effectively together to ensure children's needs were consistently met.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from care that was provided by staff who were warm and nurturing. They were skilled at when and how to interact with children which supported children to receive care that was sensitive and caring. Children were listened to and respected by staff, and it was evident that they had high aspirations for them. We found staff responded with warmth and in a fun way to children's requests. Throughout the session we saw staff and children sitting together on a large comfy sofa reading a child's preferred story or researching an interest together. We heard a lot of laughter between the children and staff. These meaningful approaches provided children with a sense of security and belonging.

Personal planning was linked to the wellbeing indicators, reviewed regularly and effective in ensuring children's individual needs were met. Staff were very knowledgeable on strategies to support children which meant children settled quickly and were provided with the right care at a time that was right for them. We found staff knew all the children very well.

Families and other professionals were positively involved in children's care and this holistic approach resulted in confident, happy and secure children. For example, the manager had provided opportunities for families and children to meet up and spent time together out with the playgroup sessions. This helped form positive relationships and promoted a safe and supportive environment for children and their families.

We spoke with staff about their medication processes and protocols and saw that this was managed in a safe and effective way. Very good communication between parents and staff ensured that medication and other supports were in place for children as needed.

The playgroup provided a hot meal at lunchtime which was cooked onsite. We found the menu to be varied, balanced and nutritious. Menus were shared with families and children were given the option to bring a packed lunch if the food on offer was not to their liking.

Children were encouraged to be independent and responsible at mealtimes and we found it to be a relaxed, sociable and unhurried experience for the children. A member of staff sat at each table eating with the children, supported them to try foods. They promoted manners and we heard rich discussions around healthy foods which helped develop children's language and social skills. On the day of inspection, opportunities for choice were limited, when we discussed this with staff, we were confident that the usual routine provided plenty opportunities for choice. Staff were aware of any allergies and dietary needs and were knowledgeable on how to react if a child was choking which helped keep children safe.

1.3 Play and learning

Children had access to clean, well maintained and organised resources. Which provided them with choice, we found children were engaged and confident in their play. We suggested that the provision of real-life experiences, objects of interest and natural materials be enhanced both indoors and out to provide more challenge, enquiry, investigation and problem solving into children's play opportunities.

Planned and spontaneous activities were child centred and responsive to children's interests. This meant that the children were actively involved in leading their own play. We could see from the well-developed and used floor books the progression and depth of learning. Documentation of the children's learning journey was a strength of the service.

Children's language and literacy skills were well supported through word aware strategies. Children were encouraged to choose words they wished to explore, and we heard children and staff reference current 'wow' words during play. There were missed opportunities to support children's skills in numeracy. We suggested ways in which the service could enhance this provision across play experiences to further develop children's skills in numeracy.

Children's ongoing progress was supported by sharing observations and next steps with parents via a digital platform. Parents engaged well with this process and shared their views on their child's observations and next steps. Observations detailed significant learning and planned next steps were focused and individual to children. We found children's progress with their next steps in could be more robust and tracked better which would help staff to effectively support children to achieve. (See area for improvement 1)

Staff were knowledgeable on how to intervene in play or help resolve minor disputes between children. They extended children's thinking skills through effective questioning and promoted children's self-worth and confidence when engaging with them in their play. We heard staff use encouraging phrases, for example, 'I believe in you' and 'I know that you can do this'. This resulted in children that were confident and achieving.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children to develop and flourish. Staff should develop a robust system to ensure children's next steps in play and learning are monitored, tracked and achieved.

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 that is right for me'. (HSCS 1.27)

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from a comfortable and welcoming environment which was spacious, well ventilated and provided lots of natural light. Staff had worked hard to provide children with different spaces to play. They had carefully considered areas, including cosy spaces which provided children with opportunities to rest and have some quiet. The large outdoor play area had interesting areas to explore and play while enabling children to take part in risky play. We saw children played happily on their own, or cooperatively in smaller groups.

Children were encouraged to make some decisions about where they played, and we found they confidently moved in between two interconnecting playrooms. However, at times we found the session was adult led. For example, children did not always have free flow access to the outdoor play area. This resulted in

children not being able to choose if they played indoors or outdoors which limited their choice. We suggested ways in which the staff could find the right balance between adult and child led play and how they could improve the opportunities for children to have independent access to outdoor play. This would give children more opportunities to get fresh air, enhance their wellbeing, and give them the choice of where to play.

Children's artwork was displayed in a respectful way and was celebrated throughout the playgroup environment and shared with families on the online digital platform. This gave children a sense of ownership and a sense of achievement.

Procedures to reduce the spread of infection and help keep children and staff safe were in place. Staff had undertaken training on infection prevention and control and food hygiene. The environment was clean and well maintained, and we observed good hygiene and hand washing routines which were embedded in practice and routines. This contributed to keeping children safe and healthy.

Staff worked well together to identify and remove risks to the children both indoors and outdoors. Robust risk assessment procedures were in place and staff undertook daily checks of the building and outdoor play area. This resulted in a safe and secure environment for children to explore and play.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had made considerable progress since the last inspection. An improvement plan with realistic targets had been developed and was used consistently to inform improvements in the quality of the service. The manager, staff and the playgroup committee met regularly to review their progress with improvement priorities. Children, their families and staff had been consulted on the vision, values and aims for the service. We found these collaborative approaches ensured everyone felt included in the service and contributed to the shared purpose and vision of the playgroup.

Quality assurance processes were in now in place to support improvement within the service which was starting to have a positive impact on improving outcomes for children and their families. Additionally, staff had started using peer monitoring to reflect on their practice together. We suggested ways in which the manager could use this monitoring to develop staff skills, confidence and knowledge further. For example, by providing staff with clear feedback and offering support and then a review of their progress after actions had been identified and undertaken.

The manager and staff team had worked hard to create a cycle of continuous improvement. They and were committed to the ongoing development of the playgroup to ensure they supported children to reach their full potential. Self-evaluation was undertaken by assessing how well the service was performing against 'How good is our early learning and childcare' documentation and there was some evidence of how children and families had informed service developments. In addition to these processes, we suggested the service consider the Care Inspectorate's: A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare to further support them with reflection and self-evaluation purposes. We suggested ways in which the views of families could be gathered and how this information can then be used to influence positive change.

At the time of the inspection, the Local Authority was supporting the service with a review of all the playgroups policies and procedures. This ongoing review will help ensure that all policies and procedures are aligned with current best practice documentation and underpin service delivery.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff morale was very high, they demonstrated enabling attitude's and believed in children reaching their full potential. They were motivated and committed to providing a positive experience for the children in their care.

Staff told us they often met with the manager and parent committee and found them to be both approachable and supportive in all areas of their practice. They felt valued and were supportive and respectful of each other. This contributed to the positive ethos between the staff team and helped children to feel safe and secure.

Effective staff deployment within the service ensured that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff. Staff knew children and families very well. All staff we spoke to were aware of individual support strategies used with children, which supported continuity of care for children. Staff demonstrated a commitment to meeting children's needs and asked us about minimum ratios. We discussed with staff, that at times ratio's require to be adapted to ensure children's individual needs are met consistently. For example, when caring for a few children with higher dependency levels attending the same session.

Staff worked well together as a team. They were confident in their roles and understood their responsibilities in keeping children safe. We found they communicated well to ensure children's experiences were not disrupted by any daily tasks that were undertaken throughout the playgroup session.

A good mix of skills, knowledge, and experience within the staff team provided children with positive experiences. We saw that staff interacted very well with the children and were supportive in their approach towards them. It was evident they enjoyed being with the children and that they were invested in the service. The parents we talked to spoke highly of the manager and staff team. One parent told us, 'They treat children like their own and genuinely have the patience of saints. I will be forever grateful for their love and nurture of our child'.

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 20 January 2020.

Action taken since then

The service had made considerable improvements. Quality assurance processes were impacting positively on aspects of the service. An improvement plan with realistic targets was in place and regularly reviewed. Progress was evaluated with reference to 'How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare' indicators. Staff were confident and involved in self evaluation processes.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.