

Baluniefield Nursery Day Care of Children

Balmerino Road
Douglas
Dundee
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 May 2023

Service provided by:
Dundee City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003004034

Service no:
CS2021000174

About the service

Baluniefield Nursery provides a daycare of children service in the Douglas area of Dundee. The service is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 104 children at any one time from the age of two years and those not yet attending primary school; of those 104 no more than 30 are aged two years.

The service is based in a residential area of Dundee and is close to local shops, parks, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 04 May 2023 between 08:30 and 17:45. Feedback was shared with the service on 09 May 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed documents
- spoke with children using the service and gathered the views of their family members.

Key messages

- Children were empowered to meaningfully lead their own play and learning experiences.
- Children experienced a natural, spacious environment which was designed to maximise opportunities for curiosity, creativity and inquiry.
- Staff should reflect on all engagements and interactions with children, to ensure these take account of individual needs, maintain children's health and wellbeing, support consistency and are in line with best practice.
- The leadership team should review and improve staff deployment to ensure children are always well supervised.
- Robust self-evaluation and improvement plans were in place to support the continuous development of the service.
- The nursery leadership team were highly motivated to improve outcomes for children and had established positive staff development opportunities.

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

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Most staff were observed to be down at children's level and engaged in play. Staff spoke in gentle voices with children, which supported them to develop secure relationships. One parent commented, 'Staff are very attentive and knowledgeable'. Staff were observed using the language of turn taking, to enable children to learn to share and take turns, modelling how to achieve this. Staff should be mindful that interactions shared with children avoid interrupting their experiences. Some staff were effective in their use of questioning during interactions to engage and extend children's experiences. For example, in the craft area, staff engaged children in a conversation about the paint they were creating, commenting that it looked dry and asking the child to think about what they could do now. This demonstrated that most staff interactions promoted children's critical thinking skills.

The staff knew the children well and had effective strategies to meet their needs. These included approaches for supporting behaviour and children's wellbeing. However, staff should be mindful that their interactions with children are effective and positive to meet individual needs. This should include, considering the impact that any interactions with children may have on their emotional wellbeing and knowing when to take a step back and seek support from colleagues and management. This would ensure that children were respected and safe (**see area for improvement 1**).

Personal plans were in place for all children, which gathered information to meet children's needs, wishes and choices. ABLe (Addressing Barriers to Learning) plans reflected what children did well, identified their areas of need and strategies to support. Mind maps gathered the views of stakeholders, including families and other agencies, which provided a holistic view of the child. It would be beneficial to date new information, as it is gathered, to ensure the strategies and support provided reflect children's current needs.

Children's dignity and privacy were maintained and they received a nurturing nappy changing experience. Staff should ensure that best practice is followed before and after changing a child's nappy, including appropriate handwashing and disposal of gloves. This would ensure that the potential risk of the spread of infection was reduced.

Appropriate storage and systems were in place for medication being administered safely, to meet children's needs. Regular audits ensured that the medication held was accurate. As a result, children's health needs were met.

Mealtimes provided a relaxed and sociable experience for children to enjoy eating and chatting together. Tables were attractively decorated using flowers, which created a nurturing ethos. Children developed their life skills during both snack and lunch, as they collected their food, chose their sides, poured their drinks, cleared away and washed their dishes. Children's individual needs were catered for, as they were able to access lunch when they were hungry and this was supported by staff. Staff sat with children promoting conversations and modelling skills, such as using cutlery. As a result, mealtimes provided a nurturing experience.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were empowered to lead their own play and learning, developing their curiosity, imaginations and critical thinking skills, using a variety of open-ended resources. One parent commented, 'The play and learning is awesome, my child has already learned so much'. Children made choices throughout their day about where to play and which resources to use. For example, children were observed using their imaginations and early mathematical skills, as they played together in the mud kitchen and accessed the water butt, to make 'coconut water'. Staff gave children space and time within their experiences to persevere and achieve. One child was observed taking several attempts to hammer a nail into a piece of wood. Staff provided the child with encouragement but did not interfere with their play. As a result, children were leaders in their own learning and achievements.

Children's language, literacy and numeracy learning was naturally engaged across the indoor environment. Staff extended children's knowledge and understanding by copying, repeating and adding to their spoken words. For example, one child was interested in finding a flower and said, 'yellow, green'. Staff extended their understanding by repeating their words and adding, 'the flower is yellow. The stem is green. That's the long bit'. This demonstrated that children's emerging literacy and numeracy skills were supported and extended.

The service were passionate about creating a child led learning experience for children. Staff discussed their observations of children's interests and held 'nursery business' meetings with children, to empower them to design their learning experiences. Staff reflected on the experiences provided for children, considering what they were going to do and what children had learned. Staff had introduced adult led workshops for children, which created opportunities in a range of experiences including yoga, fire pit and sewing. Staff shared that the workshops were popular with the children and they were able to opt into these activities. This meant that children had a range of opportunities to develop new skills.

There were very good links with the community with a range of opportunities for children to participate in meaningful outings. A timetable of outings was planned and children could opt into these, which respected their choices. These included visits to the library, walks, parks and visits based on children's interests, such as, visiting the Dichty Burn to experience nature and the flow of water. These links with the community helped to develop children's sense of belonging and knowledge of their local spaces.

Children were actively involved in recording their learning experiences within their journals. Staff took time to sit with children and talk about these, encouraging children to glue in photos and mark make their ideas. Children were excited to share their journals with us, reflecting on their experiences and learning. Observations were written to the child and effectively demonstrated children's skills and learning. As a result, children's learning was meaningful and reflected upon.

Areas for improvement

1. Children should consistently experience nurturing approaches to meet their care and wellbeing needs. To achieve this, staff should increase their understanding of interactions and strategies, to support the needs of children effectively and safely.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

How good is our setting?

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a warm, welcoming and purposeful environment. Thought had been given to ensure spaces reflected children's needs, for example, quiet, cosy areas had been developed to support children's wellbeing and resilience. Children had ample space to move around between all areas of the environment and there was free-flow access to the outdoors, which ensured the environment was well-ventilated and children had access to fresh air.

Natural furniture and resources were of a high standard and organised to promote free flow play, which provided opportunities to engage children's curiosity. Effective lighting was used across the setting, as lights could be dimmed to create a calm environment.

A wide range of open-ended natural materials and loose parts meant that children had numerous opportunities to develop their imaginations, curiosities, problem-solving skills and wonder about the world. Areas were well resourced, displayed and labelled with photographs promoting children's emerging literacy skills. One parent commented, 'Hands down the best nursery setting I have ever seen'. As a result, the environment was an inviting space for children to play and learn.

The nursery leadership team shared that developing the indoor space had been a focus and they now had plans to develop the outdoor space. Outdoors provided children with access to loose parts, where they used their problem-solving skills to build obstacle courses and participated in risky play. The space should continue to be developed improved, to reflect the purposeful indoor space.

The service was clean and well-maintained. Infection prevention and control measures could be further developed to encourage children to wash their hands after mealtimes. Staff could further develop their responsiveness by ensuring children's noses are cleaned and faces are washed after meals, as necessary. This would further promote effective infection prevention and control measures.

Risk assessments were in place and these detailed hazards, risks and actions taken to minimise these. These included risk assessments for the nursery environment and trips out into the community. Accidents and incidents were detailed and shared with families. Monthly audits recorded any trends, if a risk assessment was required and further comments. This meant that children's safety was maintained.

How good is our leadership?**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.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A vision, values and aims were in place and these described the ethos that the setting aimed to provide. The leadership team shared their plans to revisit this as they were now an established setting. This would provide an opportunity to reflect with the staff, children and families of the service to design a vision, which was inclusive to the service users.

There was a strong ethos of continuous improvement across the staff team. Staff were reflective and regularly discussed how they could develop the service to further support positive outcomes for the children. The nursery leadership team had high aspirations and led by example, which was evident within their robust improvement and quality assurance processes.

Regular team meetings provided opportunities for staff to reflect on children's individual needs, share learning together and discuss planning for the environment. A quality assurance calendar detailed focus areas for staff development, which included regular CPD (Continuous Professional Development) training. This meant that staff had opportunities to reflect and develop their practice.

Children and families were actively involved in shaping the provision, as their views were gathered through regular questionnaires and discussions. Children were empowered to share and lead their learning with their families through creating newsletters, which highlighted the topics of importance to them. Mind maps demonstrated that children were involved in self-evaluation processes, as their views were gathered on what they liked about the nursery. This demonstrated that children were meaningfully consulted.

Families were encouraged to provide feedback, which ensured the continuous improvement of the service. They had opportunities to share their ideas, thoughts and opinions through regular questionnaires and floor books were used to gather their suggestions and comments. Information was shared with families which meant their views were listened to, valued and acted upon.

A range of experiences were available for families to engage in learning together with their children. These included, cooking, Bookbug and Peep (Parents Early Education Partnership). Inclusion was at the heart of these experiences, as staff prepared take home recipe and ingredient bags, which enabled families to continue the learning at home. As a result, families were actively involved in their child's learning experiences.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

Staff were courteous and respectful to one another which created a relaxed and happy environment for children. One parent commented that they found staff to be, 'all very welcoming, caring, attentive and supportive'. Most staff were observed to be in tune with children's needs and preferences and offered personalised support. For example, using strategies to engage and support children with additional support needs. Staff shared that, at times, they felt there were missed opportunities to engage with children across the team. This was highlighted at staff meetings and would initially improve, however was an area staff felt needed further improvement to maintain consistency. This would ensure that staff were skilled in interacting with children, helping them to progress and achieve.

Staff were mostly deployed appropriately to maintain children's safety, to ensure they were well supervised. We shared examples with the leadership team that highlighted this was an area for further development, including the sides of the garden and the quiet space in the large playroom. The leadership team shared that they recognised staff positioning as an area for improvement and had plans to develop this. This would ensure children's safety was maintained and reduce the potential for harm. Staff should ensure that their SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council) registration is kept updated with the relevant information to ensure this does not lapse. This would further maintain children's safety, as they would be supported and cared for by appropriately registered professionals.

Children experienced a relaxed pace to their day with little interruption to their play experiences. Transitions were mostly well managed and gave children the time and space to move on from play, as they were ready. Staff breaks were well managed and did not impact the care provided. This demonstrated that children experienced continuity of care throughout their day.

There was a mix of experience, knowledge and skills within the staff team, with staff having a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff shared that they felt they worked well together as a team and they were confident to ask for support. All staff spoke passionately about their dedication to the children and families and had a genuine desire to do their best.

A staff handbook welcomed new staff into the service and provided information to support their understanding of the setting's values and expectations. Staff shared that they felt well supported during their induction process. They had regular meetings with the leadership team, using a two stars and a wish format to evaluate their strengths and areas for development. An induction pack had been developed alongside the National Induction Resource. This should be reviewed to ensure all areas are completed in full, as we found some to be incomplete. Opportunities to review practice through buddy observation checklists had been completed, however these could be further developed to include feedback on what went well and areas for improvement. This would ensure that staff were encouraged to reflect on their observed practice.

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	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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