

Gardenstown Playschool Day Care of Children

Bracoden Schoolhouse
Bracoden School
Gardenstown
Banff
AB45 3HA

Telephone: 01261 851 917

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 October 2023

Service provided by:
Gardenstown Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003000426

Service no:
CS2003002550

About the service

Gardenstown Playschool is delivered from a three storey building in the grounds of the primary school. Children can access the three playrooms on the lower floor and toilets on the second floor. There is access to a small enclosed outdoor play area as well as use of the play park and wooded area within the school grounds. Children attending the afterschool club access a school classroom and gym hall.

1. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children aged from 2 years to those attending primary school.

* of those 24 no more than 10 are aged between 2 - 3 years.

2. The afterschool provision will provide a service for 20 children aged from 3 years to those attending primary school.

* of those 20 no more than 5 are not yet of an age to attend primary school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 October 2023 between 10:00 and 17:15 and 5 October 2023 between 09:20 and 11:30. 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 children using the service and two of their parents/carers
- received 10 responses to our request for feedback from parents via MS Forms
- spoke with staff and management
- received six responses to our request for feedback from staff via MS Forms
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children received nurturing care and support from a staff team who knew them well.
- Children benefitted from an outdoor environment which provided opportunities for development through stimulating play.
- Consideration should be given to increasing opportunities for children to follow their interests and curiosities indoors.
- Effective communication with parents supported them to be involved in their child's care and learning.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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 evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children enjoyed kind and nurturing interactions with staff. Staff knew the children well and had formed positive relationships with them and their families. Children were supported and encouraged to participate in the activities offered with smiles and praise. Reassurance was given through hugs and encouragement if children were upset. This supported children to feel relaxed and confident. Parents were happy with the care provided for their children. Comments included, "I feel my child is well supported in the playschool environment and they are given the opportunity to grow, develop and gain confidence ..." and "I am very happy with the care my child receives. The staff and management are engaging and friendly with my child, and I find them approachable when I attend the playschool myself."

Children's privacy and dignity were promoted when they experienced personal care such as nappy changing or support in toileting, promoting their confidence and self-esteem. Parents told us that their privacy was considered when sharing information with staff.

Snacks were served in one of the playrooms and children had opportunities to participate in the choosing, preparation and serving their food and drink. Lunch was offered to children in the school canteen. There were few opportunities for children to develop their choice and independence at this time. For example, children were not encouraged to pour their own drink or serve their own food. We raised this with the manager who considered ways to promote these opportunities at lunch. During both these times children enjoyed a relaxed, unhurried and sociable experience. Children chatted to their peers and staff were on hand to support and participate in the discussions. It would further benefit children's experiences if staff consistently sat with the children. This would allow them to role model good eating habits and be closer to children who may need support.

Staff used information from personal plans to support them in identifying and meeting children's individual needs. However, we found that while it was clear reviews had been carried out with parents these were not always dated. This meant that it may not be clear what information was the most relevant to children's needs. Further development of the plans may provide a better reflection of staff's knowledge of children, their development and interests. This would support new or relief staff in accessing comprehensive details of children and their needs.

Children's safety and wellbeing was promoted as staff had a good understanding of their role in identifying recording and referring any concerns. Staff had a good awareness of factors which may impact on children's wellbeing and spoke confidently of support that could be offered.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun and enjoying lots of spontaneous play, particularly outdoors. There were some opportunities for children to develop skills in literacy through name recognition, songs and storytelling. Children participated in drawing and mark making activities which encouraged their prewriting skills. Staff were able to naturally use mathematical language in the songs and stories and children were enjoying

measuring themselves and comparing heights. We suggested that these opportunities could be developed until they were consistent across the provision. For example, scales within the sand area and mud kitchen, measuring tapes in the construction area and paper and pens in the role play area. Children were fully engaged in their outdoor play during our visit, while indoors were used for snack, storytelling and song time.

The indoor areas reflected children's interests with small world resources and books which were attractive to the children. However, there could have been a more stimulating environment for children. For example, the play dough station had cards and resources but no ingredients available for children to access. While one room had construction resources such as blocks this room was not accessed by the children apart from song time. The manager should review the resources and invitations to play available to children. They should ensure that there is enough variety and challenge to support children's learning through their interests and curiosities indoors.

Staff were very responsive to children's interests and supported them to access necessary resources to extend their play. Some staff interactions supported children to consider what would happen next or how best to keep themselves safe. This included things such as considering the speed they were using their ride on toys and encouraging them to wear safety helmets. Staff should further develop the use of positive interactions to extend children's play through exploration and investigation.

Children's learning was recorded and shared with their parents through a digital format. One parent commented that they would like to see more information within this. The manager shared plans for extending the number of observations once staff are fully confident in these. The observations we sampled showed an identification of children's learning as well as description of their learning. There were limited times where next steps had been identified and planned for, to promote children's progression. This is an area that has been identified as needing development and is included in the service's improvement plan.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children enjoyed an environment that was welcoming and appropriately furnished. Displays of children's artwork promoted their confidence, while photos of their families' supported feelings of inclusion. The rooms were bright with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Although each room was small, overall, there was ample space for children's needs. One parent commented "There are so much areas for my child to play with 3 rooms indoors and a few separate outdoor areas, the garden, forest and school park".

There was no clear area for children to rest or nap if they were tired or needed some quieter time. Currently children were made comfortable and cosy in the book corner. This area was in a busy playroom near a door and cloak area and was therefore not the most restful space. The manager agreed to consider better places to support children who need to rest.

Children's health and wellbeing benefitted from independent access to the small, paved outdoor area adjacent to the building. Here children were able to engage in a variety of play including, mark making, physical play, sand play and role play. Children were also able to access the wooded area and the play park within the school grounds, with staff support. We suggested that more use of these areas would benefit children by extending the space they had to play and the experiences available to them.

Children attending the afterschool club accessed a shared classroom and the school gym hall. This provided enough space for children's play. They were able to participate in games, including badminton and board games, and enjoyed puzzles and drawing. However, the classroom was cluttered with lots of unused resources. We suggested that some rearrangement of the classroom resources would allow more space for children to explore their interests.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place to support children's health. These included cleaning and the wearing of gloves and aprons at appropriate times such as nappy changing. Hand washing for staff and children was effectively carried out and children were supported to understand the benefits of this. The washing machine was housed within the kitchen/messy playroom. This does not adhere to current best practice which states that laundry should be in a separate room away from the kitchen and playroom. **(See area for improvement 1)**

Children's safety was promoted as the premises, including the outdoor areas were safe and secure. Risk assessments were in place to support staff practice. Staff showed a good understanding of risks and took mitigating actions where necessary. For example, removing a barrier blown over by the wind and encouraging children to wear helmets on bikes and scooters.

Areas for improvement

1. In order to support effective infection prevention and control the provider and manager should relocate the washing machine so that it is away from the kitchen and playrooms. The best practice document 'Space to Grow' should be used to inform the placement of the washing machine.

This is 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).

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager of the service had recently taken on the role and was committed to further development the service. The staff team were fully involved in the self-evaluation process and able to discuss where improvements were planned.

The children, their parents and the staff were all involved in reviewing the vision and values statement for the service. When complete the statement should reflect the aspirations of children, their families and the wider community. This will support staff in knowing what is important for the setting to meet the needs of children and families.

Parents were asked for their views on the service provided. There is a volunteer parent committee and views are also sought through chats, parent's meetings and questionnaires. A newsletter is used to share

information about developments planned for the service. Children are encouraged to give their views during discussions with staff. One parent commented, "The staff I feel have great knowledge and if I went to them about something my child may need or if I would like to see something happen or change within the playschool, I feel my voice is always listened to".

The system for self-evaluation included a red, amber, green (RAG) evaluation reflecting on best practice documents and reviews of paperwork and practice. This had resulted in areas being identified for further development. These included the assessing and tracking of children's progress, lunchtimes and children's experiences. We suggested that it may be useful to share information from the self-evaluation with parents. This would enable them to see the impact of their feedback and support the development of the service.

An improvement plan had been completed with the areas where further development had been identified. There had been reviews of progress made with the planned developments. These should indicate where there are barriers to progress and support evaluation of change. Currently, however, they were not serving that purpose. We provided feedback to the manager on ways to make the plan more effective at driving forward improvements. For example, using clear success criteria which focus on the children and their outcomes. We suggested that the improvement section of the Care Inspectorate HUB may be useful in further developing their improvement plan.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The manager and the staff team understood the importance of the service being adequately staffed. This meant that children benefitted from a staff team who had time to interact and listen to them. There was a good mix of experience and skills across the staff team. Staff we spoke to were keen to further their professional development. For example, most staff had attended outdoor training to support children's experiences in the natural wooded area.

Children and families benefitted from staff taking time to talk to parents when they dropped off or collected their children. Parents told us that, "They are great at telling me about my child's day when I pick them up". Parents also commented that they were happy with communication, one told us, "We receive regular newsletters with information of what has been going on at the setting and dates for the future etc. I enjoy the daily feedback sheets/chat, I have found staff and management approach any issues privately and discretely." This communication supported positive relationships and a continuity of care for children.

Children had formed strong relationships with staff and families were familiar with the staff team. When relief staff were needed to cover absence, existing staff or volunteers were used which promoted a continuity of care for children and families.

The staff worked well together as a team and, at most times, were proactive in identifying where they needed to be in order to best support the children. Staff communicated well with each other to facilitate this and were flexible to accommodate circumstances. For example, after lunch one member of staff was to wait with one child while the others brought the rest of the children back to the playroom.

New staff were supported by the manager and a formal induction process based on national guidance was in place. This supported staff to feel confident in their role and be aware of their responsibilities.

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	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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