

Inspection report

Great Western Pre-school at Portlethen 2 Day Care of Children

Muirend Court
Portlethen AB12 4UU

Inspected by: Liz Adam
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 29 January 2009

Service Number

CS2003045780

Service name

Great Western Pre-school at Portlethen 2

Service addressMuirend Court
Portlethen AB12 4UU**Provider Number**

SP2003000361

Provider Name

Great Western Pre-School Nursery

Inspected ByLiz Adam
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

29 January 2009

Period since last inspection

13 months

Local Office AddressJohnstone House
Rose Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1UD

Introduction

The nursery is one of eight services operated by one provider and which include both day nurseries and out of school provision. This nursery was first registered by the Care Commission on 14 April 2005. It is registered to care for a maximum of 77 children aged from birth to 12 years. Of the maximum number, no more than 10 children of primary school age can be cared before 9.00 am and no more than 5 can be cared for after 4.45 pm in the afternoons. The manager of the nursery also carries management responsibility for an out-of-school service provided from other premises within walking distance of the nursery.

The single storey nursery premises with enclosed garden were purpose built prior to Care Commission registration and are situated close to a small retail development in Portlethen.

Feedback was provided to the owner and manager at a meeting in early January to which the managers of all Great Western services had been invited.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - 4 - Good

Quality of Environment - 4 - Good

Quality of Staffing - 4 - Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - 3 - Adequate

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission's website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

Before the Inspection

The Annual Return

The service submitted a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission.

The Self-Assessment Form

The service submitted a self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission.

Views of service users

The service was provided with 25 Care Commission questionnaires for parents. Thirteen were completed and returned prior to the inspection.

Regulation Support Assessment

The inspection plan for this service was decided after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection process

Staff at inspection

Liz Adam, Care Commission Officer.

Miriam Smith, Care Commission Officer.

Evidence

The inspection sampled policies and procedures that included:

Child Protection

Whistle-blowing

Recruitment

Working with parents

Service records sampled included:

Accident and incident records

Children's records

Maintenance records

Medication records

Time was also taken to observe practice and interview staff and the manager.

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09

Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at:

<http://www.carecommission.com/>

Fire Safety Issues

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Action taken on requirements since last Inspection

There were no requirements made at the last inspection.

Comments on Self Assessment

The self-assessment was completed on-line and submitted in advance of the inspection. This indicated some of the strengths and some areas for improvement.

View of Service Users

The children spoken with said they were happy in the nursery and were keen to tell the Care Commission Officers about favourite activities and the lunch-time menus which they particularly enjoyed. Younger children were observed to be happy and relaxed in the care of the staff.

View of Carers

Overall parents said that they were happy with the service that was provided for their children. They indicated that they were kept informed about the care provided. Positive comments included:

'Thrilled with the nursery'

'High quality service - knowledgeable staff - no hesitation in recommending'

'Extremely friendly and approachable'

'Completely satisfied with the service'

'Great Western is very clean'

There were very limited negative comment but these included:

'More opportunities to discuss older children's development'

'Information about fitting in activities to the curriculum'.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

The inspection confirmed that the nursery made use of a number of methods for obtaining the views of parents, carers and children to improve the care and support provided. These included the following:

- * Daily communications
- * Observations
- * Questionnaires
- * Letters
- * Target sheets.

The daily communications assisted in the development and maintenance of positive relationships with parents/carers. Examination of evidence confirmed that these had also been used to review practice, the use of the environment and the deployment of staff to better meet the needs of children.

Staff carried out observations of the children and used this to inform planning for individual and group activities. Children were encouraged to move between activities and could access other activities and resources which were of interest to them by asking staff directly. Staff working with the very young children were observed to be 'listening' carefully to the messages that were communicated through the children's sounds and body language. This had created a calm and happy environment. The staff working with older children were observed to be calm and encouraging in their approach to promote the children's confidence and independence. Staff were seen to respond to the needs of individual children.

The nursery also made use of questionnaires to seek the views of parents and children. These had covered issues that included the following:

- * Continuity of care
- * Effective communication
- * Staff child interaction
- * Meeting children's physical needs
- * Ideas for improved practice.

Responses had been collated with the results being fed back to parents.

The nursery used 'spider maps' to explore the children's ideas for particular topics. These 'maps' had also been sent home for children to complete with their parents as a way of gaining parents' ideas on the next topic being covered.

Parents confirmed that they felt able to approach staff and the manager about particular aspects of their children's care and more general matters that concerned the nursery as a whole. The nurseries own newsletter provided an evidence of how issues from parents, brought to the attention of staff and the manager, that impacted on all children had been

actioned and advised to parents. A good example of this was a review of nappy provision. Following a request from a parent for the nursery to use reusable nappies the nursery had researched the use of these. In discussion with the parent they had decided to opt for eco-friendly disposable nappies instead. A letter had then gone to all parents in the nursery to give them the opportunity to choose to use the eco-friendly nappies. The majority of parents had chosen this option, but flexibility had still provided for parents and children who wished to not make use of them. The success of this had prompted the nursery to also investigate the use of eco-friendly nappy sacks. The use of eco-friendly disposable nappies had then been made available across the three other nurseries owned by the provider.

Areas for Development

The organisation should now consider the development of a policy that clarifies a commitment to obtaining views from parents, carers, children, staff and other stakeholders that relates to all quality aspects of the provision, i.e. care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. They might also wish to consider preparing a complimentary procedure that details the range of methods to be used, the subsequent monitoring and evaluation process and the implementation of any practice developments (see Recommendation 1).

The service should consider ways of making observations carried out in respect of individual children more readily accessible to parents.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Statement 3: We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service Strengths

Discussion with the manager and staff and examination of relevant policies and procedures indicated that ensuring the health and wellbeing of children was an important aspect of the service. There were policies and procedures in place for health and safety, administration of medication and infection control.

Staff caring for the younger children promoted the importance of establishing positive relationships and practiced responsive care. In the ante-pre and pre-school rooms staff had developed long and short-term plans which covered the five key areas to ensure the emotional, social and physical needs of children were met.

The service was participating in the National Tooth Brushing Programme.

Toilet facilities within the nursery were observed to be clean, fresh and well maintained.

Children's independence was encouraged in this area with support provided as and when necessary.

The service had a copy of the nutritional guidance for early years and this was used as a guide when considering the range of food/snacks to be offered. Observation, examination of menus and feedback from parents evidenced that healthy food and snacks were provided daily. Eleven of the 13 parents who returned the Care Commission questionnaires strongly agreed/agreed that the service provided a healthy and well-balanced diet which met their child's dietary and cultural needs. One parent indicated that they didn't know what the service provided.

The manager and a number of the staff had been employed in the service for some time. A regular staff rota was in place which promoted continuity of care for each child. The children attended on both a full-time and part-time basis and had developed good relationships with other children and with individual staff members. Discussion with the manager and staff indicated that they had a good knowledge of the individual children and their families.

One parent stated within the Care Commission questionnaire that:

'The team of staff have a fantastic rapport with families including staff outwith my child's own playroom'.

Staff were observed to be caring and sensitive towards the children. They responded to their needs and requests while encouraging sharing and taking turns. Opportunities were in place for babies and young children to sleep and rest.

All parents returning the Care Commission questionnaire agreed that the service provided regular opportunities for children to get fresh air and energetic physical play. Observation of practice on the day of inspection and photographic evidence indicated that the enclosed garden area surrounding the nursery was used on a regular basis.

Inspection Focus Area - Child Protection

The service had a child protection policy and procedure in place. Staff throughout the nursery were knowledgeable about the policy which related to child protection. Staff appeared confident in understanding their responsibilities to raise concerns with their room supervisor or the nursery manager. Child protection training had been undertaken by most of the staff group either as an integral part of the SVQ training or as an additional training opportunity.

The thirteen parents who responded to the Care Commission questionnaire strongly agreed/agreed that the staff would protect their children from harm, abuse, bullying and neglect. The service child protection procedures had been made available to parents/carers within the service information pack.

Areas for Development

As stated above, staff were knowledgeable and had received training in child protection. However, discussion with the manager identified potential shortfalls in the recording procedures directly related to child protection issues.

The provider and manager must develop a robust system for recording any information related to child protection issues. The system must include full details of the child, an

accurate recording of the concerns, information with regard to contact with other agencies and any actions taken or decisions agreed. At all times the guidance provided by the North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee must be adhered to (see Requirement 1).

While generally there were good infection control procedures in place throughout the nursery, staff reported that not all children washed their hands with soap and running water prior to lunch. Use was made of hand washing gel in one of the playrooms. After lunch the children were each provided with a damp face cloth to clean their hands and faces. Although staff waited for children's plates to be removed from the tables, food waste was not cleaned from the table before the face cloths were handed out. Children were then seen to use the face cloths not only for their face and hands but also for wiping the tables clean. Staff should be more vigilant when providing the cloths to children and remind them of the cloth's purpose (see Recommendation 2).

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

1

Number of Recommendations

1

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.

Service Strengths

Information contained in Quality Statement 1.1 is also relevant to this statement.

The nursery's newsletter provided a good example of how the nursery had responded to issues raised by parents about the environment. This related to car parking outside the nursery and the difficulties experienced from time to time by parents trying to park in close proximity to the nursery. This had been considered by the manager and her response had resulted in a better understanding amongst parents about the use of the nursery's car parking facilities and ultimately increased safety for the children.

The thirteen parents who completed the Care Commission questionnaire section on the quality of the environment indicated that they considered the premises to be safe and secure. Seven parents strongly agreed/agreed that the staff asked for their child's views about the activities and outings while six disagreed/didn't know or considered it not applicable.

Areas for Development

Information contained in Quality Statement 1.1 is also relevant to this statement.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: The environment allows service users to have as positive a quality of life as possible.

Service Strengths

The nursery building and garden were well maintained and resourced. There was strong evidence that this was an ongoing commitment as part of the service provision. Maintenance records indicated that an appropriate system was in place for staff to report any defect and also confirmed prompt attention as required. Observation of practice during the inspection evidenced staff maintaining vigilance with regard to toys which were broken during play.

A wide range of toys and equipment for indoor activities was available to the children in a quantity which allowed children to explore them freely. The garden area was also well

resourced and observation on the day of inspection and photographic evidence indicated that this was used on a regular basis. It was noted that the children always appeared appropriately dressed for the weather conditions.

The service made use of local resources which included visits to the library and other local places of interest. Staff carried out appropriate risk assessments for visits outwith the nursery. The nursery also promoted local events on their notice board.

Areas for Development

The service should continue to maintain the current good practice in this area which their self-assessment form noted as an area of strength.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service Strengths

Information contained in Quality Statements 1.1 and 2.1 are also relevant to this Statement.

The manager advised that she had an 'open door' policy for parents and viewed this as a means by which parents could comment to her informally on matters relating to all aspects of the service provision.

Twelve of the thirteen Care Commission questionnaires completed indicated that parents strongly agreed/agreed that the staff had the skills and experience to care for their child. All thirteen questionnaires indicated that parents felt their child appeared happy and confident with the staff.

Areas for Development

The manager now needs to consider the development of methods by which parents and children influence the quality of staffing. Consideration might be given to a minor role for parents in the recruitment of new staff and more formal opportunities for them to support and inform the annual appraisal process.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service Strengths

Examination of evidence and discussion with the manager confirmed that staff either held or were working towards an appropriate child care qualification through the provider's own training school. The regular visits from assessors provided the manager with additional information of observed staff practice which was used to inform planning of additional training and development needs. Staff also had access to legislative and guidance updates. While staff had a responsibility to ensure they read updates the manager also checked staffs' understanding of particular aspects of practice.

There was a system for refresher training for staff which included the areas of child protection, food hygiene and first aid. Regular training and attaining relevant qualifications was ensured through the provider's training school, the local child care partnership, and other training providers. Discussion with staff indicated a willingness to attend training and ensure their own continued professional development.

Discussion with the manager and staff and examination of evidence indicated that there were regular meetings involving the manager and specific groups of staff, eg supervisors or assistant supervisors. The members of staff shared the detail of the meetings with other staff in their playrooms following the meetings and prior to the formal minutes being made available. The manager provided advance notice of the agenda for these meetings and staff were aware that they could request additional items to be put on this for discussion.

Staff were observed to be warm and caring in their interactions with the children and were seen to take pleasure in the children's achievements. Staff spoken with confirmed that they respected their manager and found her to be approachable and supportive.

The manager advised that she had registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) as the manager of the service and was working towards achieving an appropriate management qualification. The manager also advised that the service was progressing the registration of staff with the SSSC.

Areas for Development

There was discussion with the manager about the format of staff meetings and ensuring that the minutes reflected that staff were involved in the discussions.

Observation of practice and discussion with the manager and staff indicated that there was a positive and supportive atmosphere among the staff within the nursery. The manager should now give consideration to implementing meetings involving the full staff group to ensure continued development of positive working relationships among the staff group. These meetings would also provide opportunities for the staff team to consider changes in legislation or updates to best practice guidance.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 3 - Adequate

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

Information detailed in Quality Statements 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 are also relevant to this Statement.

The nursery had a formal complaints procedure in place which was available to all parents. In addition there was a comments, compliments and complaints box at the entrance to the nursery. The manager also operated an open door policy and was observed to be friendly and welcoming to all parents and children as they came in to the nursery.

Areas for Development

The self-assessment form identified the development of exit questionnaires and parent questionnaires for assessing the quality of management and leadership.

The provider and manager should continue to develop ways in which the parents could influence the quality of the management of the nursery. They should also reflect on how the children already influence the management and explore ways that this can be increased (see Recommendation 3). This would also provide additional evidence for Quality Statement 4.4 related to quality assurance systems and processes.

CCO Grading

3 - Adequate

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Statement 4: We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.

Service Strengths

The service made use of number of guidance documents including:

National Care Standards
Child at the Centre 2
Birth to Three - Our Youngest Children
Nutritional Guidance or Early Years
Cook-safe

North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee guidelines.

A number of formal and informal monitoring and evaluation processes were in place. These included the manager's daily contact with staff, parents and children; visits from training assessors and the organisation's development manager. Inspection reports from the Care Commission and HMLe were also used to inform the nursery's development plan.

Monitoring of the service was, however, primarily the monitoring of curriculum planning by the organisation's development officer to inform the development plan provided to the local authority education department as required by the partnership agreement. The development officer had made visits to the nursery to assess action in relation to the National Care Standards, but these had been infrequent. The manager made use of target sheets to identify specific actions that needed to be taken in the nursery. The inspection indicated that policies were subject to review, but there was no evidence of who was involved in the review process.

Inspection Focus Area - Notifications

Discussion with the manager indicated that she was aware of the requirement to report issues in relation to staff misconduct to the SSSC.

Discussion with staff indicated that they were aware of the nursery's whistle-blowing policy in relation to raising concerns about inappropriate conduct by staff or issues of poor practice. They indicated that they were confident that their confidentiality would be protected where possible and felt they would be supported by their manager.

Areas for Development

The information detailed in Quality Statement 1.1 (Areas for Improvement) is also relevant for this Statement.

The provider and manager should establish processes for obtaining the views of all stakeholders to influence the monitoring, evaluation and the quality assessment of the service. This should include the review of policies and procedures (see Recommendation 1).

There was no systematic monitoring of practice across the nursery and procedures for more systematic monitoring of the service should be put in place (see Recommendation 4).

The current development plan for the service was done using the local council format that is required as part of their partnership agreement for funded pre-school placements. The manager assured that all staff were involved in this process and that it took account of the needs of all the children. Despite this the development plan did not cover the development needs of the service as a whole. The manager should record development plans that cover the needs of the whole service (see Recommendation 5).

The provider has responded to the above paragraph as follows:-

"I feel far too much emphasis has been placed on the term 'development plan' and that other procedures we use for developing the service such as action plan, maintenance logs and target sheets have been excluded from being considered part of our development of the service. As a result of this, the whole development of the practice has not been taken into consideration and has not been seen as part of the development 'programme'. We have

formal procedures in place that develop the service that are recorded in other ways. For example, quite large maintenance/structural issues are met throughout the settings". This will be taken into account at the next inspection.

Inspection Focus Area - Notifications

As stated above, staff were aware of the nursery's whistle-blowing policy. This stated that it will follow a clear procedure but there was no accompanying procedure available. Although staff were confident to raise issues they did not know what would happen once they had spoken to their manager. A procedure to be followed by staff and the management must be developed to support the appropriate and consistent management of concerns about nursery practice that are raised by staff (see Recommendation 6).

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

3

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

N/A

Requirements

1. The recording and referral systems in respect of child protection issues must at all times reflect best practice guidance.

SSI 2002/114 - Regulation 4(1)(a) - A regulation to ensure that providers shall make proper provision for the health and welfare of service users.

Recommendations

1. The service should continue to develop the use of a range of methods to allow parents, children and other relevant people to participate in assessing and improving the quality of all aspects of the service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to 16- Standard 7 and Standard 13.

2. Infection control procedures directly related to hand-washing should be rigorously implemented.

National Care Standards - Early Education and childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2 and Standard 3.

3. A range of opportunities to influence the management of the service should be provided to all service users.

National Care Standards - Early Education and childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14.5.

4. Systems that ensure the systematic monitoring of the whole service should be put in place.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 13.

5. Development plans that cover the needs of the whole service should be developed.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 13.

6. The provider should develop a whistle blowing procedure which is clear and accessible. The procedure should ensure that concerns raised by staff are addressed appropriately.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14.

Liz Adam

