

Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Great Western Pre-School @ Portlethen Day Care of Children

7 Muirend Court
Portlethen
ABERDEEN

Service provided by: Lorndale Aberdeen Limited

Service provider number: SP2013012192

Care service number: CS2013321323

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and 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.

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	5	Very Good
Quality of environment	5	Very Good
Quality of staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5	Very Good

What the service does well

The service is managed by two very motivated and organised managers. They constantly strive to improve the service by seeking the views of parents and children.

We noted how staff involved the children in their learning and provided them with caring and nurturing experiences.

What the service could do better

During our inspection, we found the following areas for improvement and asked management to review and address these:

- i) to review all care plans and ensure the health visitor details are included
- ii) to look at the hand-washing procedures and ensure all staff followed the guidelines
- iii) to monitor the nappy changing routine to ensure all staff are aware of the correct procedures
- iv) to review snack and lunchtime procedures.

What the service has done since the last inspection

Management, staff and families told us the menus had recently changed and overall, the feedback received was positive.

The pre-school room had been extended and developed to allow children more space for play and learning.

We noted the service was upgrading the garden and parental help had been requested and accepted.

We noted there had been a change in how the Great Western nursery group was managed. This had involved all such childcare services de-registering under their previous organisation and applying for a new registration. This had been completed and the new management structure was working well.

Conclusion

We noted that management was well-respected by families and staff and their enthusiasm and keenness to provide a good quality service. We also found that parents were given many opportunities to be involved in nursery life.

We observed kind and caring staff and the good quality learning experiences offered to the children.

1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

This service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 29 May 2014.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by the Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people and what they can do to improve. GIRFEC is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 82 children aged from birth to not yet attending primary school, where no more than 15 places are available for 0 - 2 year olds, or a maximum of 77 children aged from birth to not yet attending primary school, where no more than 30 places are available for children aged 0 - 2 years.

The purpose-built nursery is located within Portlethen; an area to the south of Aberdeen undergoing continual development and expansion.

The service operates Monday to Friday and offers care between the hours of 7.30 am to 6.00 pm.

Great Western Pre-school Nursery's mission statement states:

'Our vision is to prepare an environment that is stimulating for each child,

regardless of age or individual need. To have knowledgeable staff who are trained to provide that environment with a caring attitude whilst maintaining a sense of humour. We feel that children should be cared for in a light-hearted way whilst providing structure and order throughout their day.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

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

Quality of care and support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of environment - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good

This report and grades represent our 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. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection that took place on Monday 27 April 2015 between 8.35 am and 5.00 pm, Tuesday 28 April 2015 between 8.15 am and 5.20 pm, Wednesday 29 April 2015 between 8.30 am and 1.20 pm and Thursday 30 April 2015 between 8.30 am and 12.40 pm. This was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

Feedback was given to the general manager and managers at the end of the inspection. Thanks are due to management and staff for their cooperation and hospitality. As part of the inspection we took account of the completed annual return and self assessment that we asked the provider to complete and submit to us.

Care Standards Questionnaires were issued to forty parents and carers of children who used the service. Twenty-two completed questionnaires were returned to us before the inspection process.

During this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources, including the relevant policies and procedures, records and other documents, including:

- registration certificate
- aims of the service
- parents' prospectus
- open door policy

- planning
- floor books
- methods of participation
- our golden rules

- parent notice boards
- care standards questionnaires
- service questionnaires
- wall displays

- accidents and incidents records
- management of medicine policy and recording systems

- staff monitoring records
- staff meeting minutes
- induction procedures
- staff rotas
- recruitment files
- recruitment procedure
- CPD files

- complaints policy
- infection control policy
- hand washing procedures
- child protection procedures
- audits carried out by the service

- snack menus
- healthy eating policy
- signing in sheets

- personal plans
- interactive learning diaries (ILDs)
- risk assessments
- maintenance procedures
- photographs.

Discussions with:

- children
- the managers
- the staff team

- five parents.
- observation of interaction between staff and children in the nursery
- observation of staff interaction with one another
- observation of staff interaction with parents
- observation of practice within the nursery
- observation of toys, activities and resources available
- examination of the environment indoors and outside.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed, very detailed self assessment document from the provider. We were satisfied with the way the provider completed this and with the relevant information included for each heading that we grade services under.

The provider identified what it thought the service did well, some areas for development and any changes planned. The provider told us how the people who used the care service had taken part in the self assessment process.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We saw all children enjoy a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences throughout our visit. They appeared happy, confident and settled in staffs' company.

We chatted with sixteen children throughout the course of our inspection. We watched as they played happily with their friends.

Those children in the 'Lively Lions' were studying caterpillars and their life cycle. They confidently told us how the caterpillars had made a cocoon, which was their little house, and had changed in to butterflies!

The 'Jungle Crew' had requested they look after chicks. In response to their

request, management had sourced eggs and an incubator. The children watched and documented their progress. They were keen to show us the chicks during our visit and were able to tell us their names. One child told us he was "drawing a chick called Amy". Another child told us they "came from an egg and they hatched!" and how they "felt soft and eat corn".

We noted that the youngest children enjoyed a variety of experiences both indoors and outdoors. They were able to choose their play items as they were displayed and accessible at their level.

Taking carers' views into account

We asked the service to distribute Care Inspectorate pre-inspection questionnaires to a sample of 40 parents prior to our inspection, asking their views about the care their child received. Twenty-two questionnaires were returned to us before the inspection.

Parents had the opportunity to make comments about the service in the questionnaire. These are listed below and included within the body of the report.

"I have always been extremely comfortable leaving my children at GWPS. I have been using this service now for nearly seven years and my second child is about to start P1. The nursery have fully prepared both children for the transition to school."

"The nursery has a great set out with each room having access to outside (securely), quiet area to sleep for the younger children, freshly prepared, healthy food, varied activities and most importantly, caring and friendly staff."

"Afternoon snack portions are not big enough if a child is doing full day. Lunch is served around 12 noon and it's hard to cope with light snack 'til 5:30pm when they get collected. Happy to pay more so they can get bigger portion or second warm meal during a day."

We also had the opportunity to speak informally with five parents during the inspection. Their comments have been included within the body of the report.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very 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

As part of the inspection process we look at how the management team and staff involve parents, carers and the children within the service. We found that the Great Western Pre-school @ Portlethen was performing to a very good standard in relation to this.

We spoke with parents during our inspection and examined parental responses to the Care Standards Questionnaires distributed prior to our visit.

We sampled children's files and looked at the variety of methods used to encourage participation and include children and their families with the service.

A variety of pertinent policies and procedures were displayed at the nursery entrance for parents' information and reference if and when required.

We noted that in each room, staff knew the children and their families well, and overall, demonstrated an understanding of what they liked to do. We observed good communication between management, staff, children and their families; established, friendly relationships were also evident. **See areas for improvement.**

A detailed working in partnership with parents policy recognised the value and importance of involving parents. We noted opportunities to be actively involved in the service were extended to parents. It also stated in their open door policy that class supervisors and nursery management would always be available to discuss concerns with parents. Parents we interviewed informally commented, "management always take time to talk with you" and how they "found staff to be open".

Parents were kept well-informed and updated about their child's progress through a variety of means; parents' evenings, open evenings, meetings, emails, newsletters, the nursery prospectus and their Puddlestoppin' website, posters and daily chats. Parents we spoke with confirmed these methods of communication were in place and commented positively about detailed handovers at the end of their child's session. **See areas for improvement.**

Learning diaries had been set up for each child and these documented some development, learning and achievements. Children had daily opportunities to look at their diaries alone or with friends. We found that children were excited to share their diaries with us and enjoyed reliving their individual learning experiences. Parents had access to their child's diary both within the nursery and online. One parent told us how her child liked to talk through what he'd done whilst referring to his diary. Another commented, "the things I see through the learning diaries seem good". This practice helped to involve parents in their children's learning and development. **See areas for improvement.**

Colourful wall displays and documentation, featured children's artwork and photographs throughout the nursery and overall; these evidenced how they had taken responsibility for their learning. Examples including sand, paint and glue pictures, ice experiments and their summer holiday discussions, celebrated children's achievement and this in turn would help boost their self-confidence, motivation and self-esteem. **See areas for improvement.**

Mind maps carried out by the children along with staff were displayed throughout the nursery as well as within their floor books. Their current, well planned projects were in-depth and demonstrated children's thoughts, views and participation. One child was happy to show us their 'chick' floor book,

telling us how they had hatched. She proudly showed us her drawing and pointed out her name! This practice would help towards making a positive impact on children's overall development and boost their confidence.

We took account of the wealth of information displayed within the reception area. This included evaluations and feedback, curricular updates and useful, child-related booklets and leaflets. This practice ensured that parents felt included and involved in their children's nursery experience.

We noted that there were many ways in which parental involvement was encouraged by management and staff. Parents and their relatives had responded well to a request for help to further develop their garden area. Parents we spoke with commented on their involvement in an eco-project and their input regarding the new menus.

Home-nursery links were built through a variety of means. Children for example, had the opportunity to take Creative Croc, Daisy Duck or Happy Hippo home for the weekend. Families were encouraged to include the toy in their weekend routines, reporting on what they did or where they went. This helped to strengthen home-nursery partnerships as well as providing a glimpse into family's lives.

We found that management was diligent in sourcing parents' thoughts and views regarding the service. Questionnaires and 'Better Place to be' audits were regularly carried out and targeted different areas each time. These were always collated and the results shared with any improvements identified, realised as a result.

Thirteen respondents to our Care Standards Questionnaires strongly agreed and two agreed that the service had involved them and their child in further developing the service.

Areas for improvement

We noted how well staff knew the children they cared for; their likes and dislikes. However there were no opportunities for children to spontaneously evaluate the daily provision. We discussed this with management and they agreed to look into appropriate ways to evidence how children's views and

suggestions were being used to develop and improve the service.

One young child showed a real interest in our bright coloured pens and paper whilst we recorded our observations. Staff took some time to pick up on this cue; however once they did, the child was clearly engaged in this activity as were several more of his friends. Staff must remember to observe and be tuned into children's individual needs, especially those too young to express their needs verbally. We highlighted this observation to management and they agreed to share this information with staff.

We reviewed the Care Standards Questionnaires and found one parent wanted more information about their child's time at nursery. One parent we interviewed informally felt more basic information, such as the items parents had to provide, should be included in the nursery prospectus. We discussed this with management and they agreed to address these points.

We found some inconsistencies regarding the quality of recording observations and identifying next steps in learning for individual children. Within some learning diaries we saw that they did not always give a clear account of children's progress, where they needed help or more challenges. There were at times, no purposeful next steps identified to support children in their development. We also found that some diary entries had not been dated to demonstrate progression. We discussed the need for management to support staff across the nursery to improve their approach to planning, taking account of children's interests, learning and developmental needs. Management told us how the development of learning diaries was an identified priority and had been included in their improvement plan. They felt confident these areas would be addressed and therefore impact positively on outcomes for children. We noted there is a need to ensure that children's work is always dated and that details as to where suggestions for their learning had come from are included.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 3

"We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met."

Service Strengths

During this inspection we found that Great Western Pre-school @ Portlethen had very good systems and processes in place to ensure that the health, wellbeing and the individual needs of the children were being met. As part of this inspection we also looked at how the nursery had promoted children's health and wellbeing through infection prevention measures.

We noted key policies and procedures were in place. These informed staff and parents of best practice in relation to the health and wellbeing of the children. These had been reviewed and updated by the management team and were shared with parents and carers. We noted these were placed in the entrance and reception areas and were available at any time. The interactive website also held information for parents and carers and this was another way the service could share information about how they cared for the children's health and wellbeing.

We noted that all the children were happy, confident, and settled within the nursery. All children were supported well by the caring and kind staff. Staff in each area demonstrated that they knew the children in their care. One parent commented how, "staff were very caring and interested in her child" and "the class supervisor picked up on illness the day before our child had a virus as they knew she just wasn't herself".

We saw the older children looking happy, settled and content as they enjoyed a variety of indoor activities and healthy outdoor experiences. We watched as they played and worked together, sharing, turn-taking and taking the play-lead, appropriate to their age and stage of development. We saw that children were able to make choices in their play, promoting their independence and their range of experiences.

We saw how well staff supported babies and very young children during their rest and play. Overall, they appeared happy and well cared for. They benefitted from consistent, caring and nurturing staff, who were sensitive to their needs,

and gave them constant reassurance, praise and encouragement. **See areas for improvement.**

We looked at children's files and noted information about their care needs had been sourced. This included information about the child, family, emergency contacts, allergies, medical requirements, likes and dislikes and fears as well as additional support needs. We looked at care plans and chronologies and noted these were stored safely within each room. There was one for each child and these were updated regularly. **See areas for improvement.**

We looked at how the service administered medication and found this was safely organised and securely stored. Medication was taken in by parents and carers daily if needed and there was a signing-in and out system, which everyone was familiar with. Appropriate systems were in place to record the administration of medication. We discussed the importance of making sure all staff were aware of how to give, and record administration of medication. The manager told us they all received training as part of their induction.

We looked at how staff made sure children were kept free from harm, abuse, bullying and neglect. We found that the staff had attended child protection training and updated this on a rolling programme. New staff were introduced to the service's own child protection policy during their induction period. We asked staff how they would act if they were concerned about a child. The majority of staff we asked demonstrated that they were aware of whom to approach if they had concerns of this nature and the organisation responsible for investigating allegation. This showed us that overall, the service was actively working to safeguard the children on all levels. **See areas for improvement.**

We looked at nutrition during this our inspection. The nursery promoted healthy eating and shared this information with parents and carers. We noted information about the new 'Allergen within Food' had been shared with parents and carers with appropriate displays. The nursery provided all snacks and meals which were prepared by the cook in the fully equipped kitchen. The cook used nutritional guidelines and appropriate food preparation procedures.

We noted the very good procedures in place for those children experiencing food allergies or observing cultural beliefs and found that staff overall knew of

these children. We found that the cook had very good, safe procedures in place to ensure children's dietary requirements were met and respected.

The service had recently updated the menu and had involved the parents and carers as well as children in choosing foods. There was now a six-weekly rolling menu. We asked some of the parents and carers if they liked the new menu. Parents we spoke with commented:

"Menus seem well-balanced."

"There's a good balance of things for the children to try." **See areas for improvement.**

We noted water was available in each room for the children should they be thirsty.

Snacks and meals were served in the playrooms. Staff sat with the children and encouraged good table manners. Children could eat by themselves however were offered help when needed. Diluted fruit juice was offered with the meal. We noted the meal times were organised differently from room to room depending on the age of the children. It was encouraging to see the 'helpers' in the pre-school rooms where children took turns at being a helper and served their friends with lunch. **See areas for improvement.**

We looked at the sleeping routine in the baby room. There was a separate sleeping room contained within the main room with cots and bedding. We saw this room was warm and cosy with a viewing window for ease of supervision. We also noted that staff observed parents' preferences regarding their child's sleeping routine and pattern.

We noted in the 'Cheeky Chicks' all children were encouraged to have a rest on the floor mats after lunch. An area was prepared within the playroom by staff with help provided by the children. Staff sat with the children in a calming atmosphere and quietly settled the children to sleep. We saw those who did not sleep could play in the other section of the playroom with staff supervision.

We looked at how the staff managed control of infection and overall we found

this was managed well. Staff promoted hand washing and we saw children washing their hands before eating, after messy and outdoor play, and after using the toilet or at nappy change. We saw liquid soap and paper towels for drying hands were available. We also saw staff helping children to wash their hands. **See area for improvement.**

We observed nappy changing. We found that the staff treated the babies and children with respect, whilst maintaining their privacy and dignity. We saw staff talking and singing and in some cases, soothing babies during nappy changes. We saw children relaxed and happy, which showed us they were comfortable with staff. **See areas for improvement.**

Access to fresh air and exercise was very good with children from all areas outside playing during our inspection. We enjoyed seeing children from the 'Jungle Crew' play in their mud kitchen. We watched and listened to them as they made 'strawberry worm juice' and 'bumpy porridge!' We also accompanied the 'Lively Lions' to their very enjoyable 'mini kickers' football session. One child told us he liked "playing and running with the football".

Areas for improvement

We spoke with one parent who also commented in the Care Standards Questionnaire. She described her initial concerns regarding her child's basic care when he first started attending nursery, for example having a runny nose that wasn't cleaned and occasions when she collected her child wearing a dirty nappy. She did however say she was now convinced her child was happy and had very good energy.

As a result, we observed nappy changing and those children with a runny nose. We found that children's nappies were regularly changed and we observed one child having their nappy changed out with allotted times, before he went home. Staff also recorded when children's nappies were changed. In discussion, management told us they had appointed an additional staff member to work late in the event any nappies required to be changed.

We also noted that the older children were offered hankies although on occasions, weren't supervised or assisted. We found that on the whole, the younger children's noses were cleaned, although staff could deal with this more

promptly.

Children's information was recorded within their individual, confidential files; however we found the details for the health visitor were not always included.

See Recommendation 1.

In discussion with staff, we noted that not all staff were aware of the organisation where child protection concerns would be referred to. Management agreed to refresh staff's knowledge.

We noted in the Care Standards Questionnaires a comment regarding the portion sizes of the afternoon snack. The parent felt they were not big enough when lunch was served at midday. We observed lunch times and noted two courses were offered at lunchtime with decent portions served. We discussed this with management and they advised they felt a snack was sufficient for the older children at this time and only the youngest children required a more substantial snack/tea. Management also told us they would be happy to address any personal requests.

We saw that staff washed their hands and wore protective disposable aprons prior to serving snacks and meals. However, we saw there was often no cutlery to serve food during snack time and staff used their hands, having previously touched the lids of bins, chairs and tables. These practices compromised infection control and children's health and wellbeing.

We observed lunch times in all playrooms during our inspection. We discussed with management the need to review:

- Hand washing procedures prior to children sitting down at the table.
- Children's involvement in the activity where appropriate, as this would encourage their independence as well as keep them engaged, for example, serve themselves and after lunch, help to tidy up, sweep the floor and so on.
- The waste bins. Suitable food waste bins were provided however, the positioning/height needed to be adjusted for children to enable them to dispose of waste safely.

Bins were also provided for other waste, however children/staff need to be reminded to use the pedal and not lift the lid.

We noted that although some of the younger children were very able, their snacks and drinks were served to them. These experiences did not contribute towards children's learning and development or gaining independence. Management agreed to review snack and mealtimes to ensure more challenging experiences for children. **See Recommendation 2.**

We noted that staff encouraged all babies and children to wash their hands. However we saw that this was not always done following current procedures. We noted some staff put liquid soap directly on to the child's hand then encouraged them to rub together and rinse off under running water. Others rinsed the soap off instantly. Hands should be wetted first before soap applied.

It was encouraging to see that babies were encouraged to wash hands after nappy change but again this should be done correctly. **See Recommendation 3.**

There were clear written nappy change procedures displayed in the nappy change areas. However, we saw some staff did not follow the nappy changing procedures correctly. Therefore, we made a recommendation that staff follow the written procedures correctly. **See Recommendation 4.**

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 4

1. Management and staff should ensure all care plans contain the health visitor details to ensure each child's care needs are met.

National Care Standards, early education and childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 4: engaging with children; standard 3: health and wellbeing.

2. The manager and staff should review snack and mealtimes to provide more positive experiences for children.

National Care Standards, early education and childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 2: safe environment; standard 3: health and wellbeing.

3. The hand-washing procedure should be reviewed to ensure all staff are aware of and followed the correct hand-washing procedures with the children.

National Care Standards, early education and childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 2: a safe environment.

4. Management should monitor staff to ensure they are following the nappy changing procedures within the nursery. This is to ensure the control of infection is maintained and the children are not at risk of cross infection.

National Care Standards, early education and childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 2: a safe environment.

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 2

“We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected.”

Service Strengths

We sampled a range of evidence and found the service's performance to be of a very good standard in relation to this Quality Statement. We came to this decision after we spoke with management and staff, looked at resources, safety records, written risk assessments and observed staff practice and the environment.

On our arrival, we were welcomed by the managers in a friendly, respectful and professional manner; we were then introduced to staff. During our time at Portlethen we observed how welcome all those visiting the service were made to feel. We noted this atmosphere filtered throughout the service. We saw that children cared for in all areas appeared relaxed, happy, and busy playing with the activities both indoors and outdoors.

We found that the entrance to the nursery had a secure entry system ensuring that children within were kept safe. Visitors were required to sign in at the main reception on their arrival. Parents signed their children into nursery as they arrived for their session. **See areas for improvement.**

We saw that children were well supervised throughout their time at nursery by staff. Adult:child ratios were maintained ensuring the safety of all children and that their individual needs, on the whole, were being met.

Appropriate procedures were in place to record accidents and incidents. We found that accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with parents. Staff were trained in first aid so they could act quickly and effectively if and

when required. This helped to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children at nursery. Signage directed individuals to the various locations where first aid boxes were accessibly stored in the event of an accident. There were also first aid kits available to take when out for walks or outings.

We noted the nappy changing area was well resourced and easily accessed. A toilet area was shared with the remaining children and was situated close to their playrooms. During our inspection we saw that a toilet was out-of-order and that the issue had been logged and fairly promptly repaired. We noted how well staff worked together to ensure children's toileting needs were met during this time.

The children in all rooms were familiar with the routines as well as 'nursery rules'. Staff were good role models showing kindness and caring natures and constantly praised good behaviour and manners. One parent who responded to our Care Standards Questionnaire commented, "My child is too young to be shown true code of behaviour but they do show basic rules for my child in nursery".

Overall we noted a high standard of hygiene and cleanliness within the premises. We saw staff tidy as they went, wipe up spills when any occurred and clean floors after snacks and meals. We saw that the kitchen was clean, tidy and well organised. The meals were cooked in-house and transferred safely from the kitchen to the playrooms.

Areas for improvement

We noted throughout our inspection, how able and confident children were and felt they would be able to self-register when arriving for their session. Management agreed and assured us they would take this forward.

Grade

5 - Very 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

This statement was assessed as it is important that staff in care services ensure those using the service, experience a quality environment and have access to a range of positive experiences.

At this inspection, we considered how well the premises were maintained. We considered the space, layout and equipment, examined relevant records and observed how the environment and equipment was used. We found the service to be performing at a very good standard for this statement.

The premises at Portlethen is a purpose-built building on one level with spacious outdoor areas surrounding the nursery. We found all areas used by the service to be well maintained, clean and fit for purpose. We saw that the premises were well ventilated and had natural light from the windows. Children's art work and photographs were displayed throughout the premises. This showed children that their creative efforts were valued and gave parents opportunities to share in their child's learning and development.

The equipment, furnishings and resources were age and stage appropriate for the children attending the service. Staff planned appropriately for each age group, to ensure resources were on offer for the children which would interest and engage them. We noted how staff reacted positively to children's suggestions and how they visited the other playrooms together to request they borrow specific resources.

Overall, we noted that children had very positive play and learning experiences. Toys and equipment were laid out so that all children could access them easily; toys and activities were displayed on low shelves and within trough-like containers so that the babies could make informed choices. We saw children making good use of the space within their rooms. They knew where to access play materials and confidently made choices. We saw how they chose to paint, draw, make puzzles and use the physical play equipment. We also saw good

evidence demonstrating how overall, children were involved in risk assessing their activities to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

The nursery had four main playrooms and all were equipped with doors leading directly outside. We saw that all children had daily opportunities to play outdoors or venture out into the local community.

The older children spent long periods of time playing outside. Free-flow play for the children in the 'Jungle Crew' was very well organised and children were very familiar with the procedure. We watched as they broke up an ice puddle and one child announced, "we're breaking up the ice! It breaks up then melts away like an ice pool!". An area had been created for children to plant their own vegetables. Children also experienced opportunities for role play, making arts and crafts and using the computer, to name but a few. We saw how many children also enjoyed reliving their experiences by looking through their learning diaries. This arrangement provided opportunities for children to make choices and develop their sense of independence. We saw that staff supervised this area well. **See areas for improvement.**

All parents who returned the Care Standards Questionnaires 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' that the service had enough space for the children to play and get involved in a range of activities. One parent commented, "Lots of arts, crafts, playing, singing and dancing - there seems to be a good variety of toys and story books".

Areas for improvement

We found that as children re-entered the 'Jungle Crew' playroom, a lot of mud was transferred from the outdoors, in. We raised this point with management and discovered they had already identified this area for improvement and had ordered suitable equipment to solve the issue.

We discussed with management the need to review the quantity, presentation and in some instances, the condition of some resources within the playrooms. For example, some books appeared dog-eared and tatty. The home corners/ role play areas should be better resourced. More mark-making and independent art and craft opportunities should be available and accessible. Puzzles for example could be more attractively displayed and appealing to stimulate

children's interest. We observed children trying to play with the 'gloop'; however it had all dried up from the day before and as a result, was inaccessible. Management agreed to review these areas.

We noted that staff in the 'ducklings' were in the process of developing treasure baskets for their children's interest, play and development.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 2

"We are confident that our staff have been recruited, and inducted, in a safe and robust manner to protect service users and staff."

Service Strengths

At this inspection we found staff recruitment was carried out centrally. We noted the procedure had been followed, ensuring that recruitment was carried out in a way that safeguarded the children being cared for.

Organisational recruitment procedures for all staff were in place to ensure safe recruitment. A Disclosure/Protecting Vulnerable Groups policy outlined clear procedures to follow to ensure children's safety and protection.

An examination of the two most recent recruitment files evidenced how the provider recruited staff in line with their own recruitment policy, legal and regulatory requirements and best practice guidance.

The processes for staff recruitment included:

- the use of an application form
- an accompanying CV
- uptake of two verbal and two written references; one from a current or most previous employer
- photographic proof of identification
- address related identity
- a GP letter confirming mental and physical suitability
- disqualification declaration
- PVG check and clearance
- evidence of skills, values and experiences, including qualifications

- SSSC registration where applicable
- work permit if applicable
- contract of employment, including start date
- evidence to confirm staff induction
- a procedure for re-checking PVGs every three years
- a clear staff employment checklist to follow. These evidenced successful applicants did not take up their positions prior to receipt of successful references and PVG check.

We noted the service had a very good induction regime in place for new staff which ensured that all staff understood their roles within Great Western Pre-school @ Portlethen. We asked two new staff members how they had been recruited and they described the above process.

We noted that the recruitment process was extremely well-managed. Management's records were clear and concise; their filing systems were organised and respected staff confidentiality.

Areas for improvement

We saw that records were kept when written references were requested and received. We noted however, that referees did not date their correspondence. We discussed this with management at feedback and they agreed to rectify this immediately.

Grade

5 - Very 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

We sampled a range of evidence and found the service's performance to be of a very good standard in relation to this Quality Statement. We came to this decision after we spoke with staff, looked at records and observed staff practice. Information included in Quality Theme 1 and Quality Theme 2 was also taken into consideration.

Staff photographs, names and their designation were displayed at reception making them known to families and visitors. Staff photographs were also displayed daily on classroom doors, advising parents of the staff group caring for their children for that day.

We saw how staff welcomed children and their families into the nursery. We observed friendly, caring and sensitive interactions with the children. These practices contributed towards children's overall feelings of security, inclusion and confidence.

We saw that the staff group worked well together and had clear roles and responsibilities. We found that staff communicated well and were dedicated, enthusiastic and motivated in their practice. Staff were committed to making improvements within the nursery and improving the quality of experiences and outcomes offered to children in their care.

Staff qualifications confirmed they had a very good range of experiences, skills and training. For example, we saw that most staff had attended allergen training to keep abreast of recent developments in relation to food standards. In discussion with staff, they told us how management allocated each staff member development time. We noted how they embraced opportunities to attend further training and familiarise themselves with current, best practice guidance, for example Building the Ambition document. In discussion with staff, they were able to relate confidently, how they felt training had improved and informed their practice.

Peer monitoring was being undertaken to highlight staff's good practice and areas for improvement. This helped support staff in their practice and as a result, improve outcomes for children.

We looked at staff supervision and training. We noted that formal monitoring of staff practice was being undertaken. We noted that regular staff support meetings were in place and how this helped the managers in identifying strengths and those areas where staff required additional support. We also noted there was an annual review programme carried out. This was imminent and staff were in the process of completing their necessary feedback forms.

Thirteen respondents to the Care Standards Questionnaires strongly agreed and eight agreed that staff had the skills and experience to care and support their child's learning and development; one however disagreed. Parents commented:

"Staff are very caring and interested in my child."

"All staff have always been extremely professional and approachable."

"Through staff encouragement my child is developing into a confident and well-balanced individual. He is quite a character by nature and can be a handful on occasions. However, despite this the staff have supported his needs and allowed him to flourish."

"I would also like to add that although there is a spread of ages of staff members, all carry out their duties with a sense of professionalism at all times. Development within staff members at this nursery is very evident!"

"Teachers are really lovely in all rooms."

"Staff always very good."

"More stable staff now."

"Staff in the main good."

All respondents to the Care Standards Questionnaire confirmed their children appeared happy and confident with the staff.

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the body responsible for

registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training. Its function is to raise standards of practice, strengthen and support the workforce and increase the protection of people who use services. We saw that the majority of staff were qualified to the required level, and were taking responsibility for ensuring that their practice was regularly updated in line with best practice guidance. The managers told us all new staff would be supported to gain a qualification. We found that all staff who were required to had applied for registration with the SSSC.

We noted that all new staff and students were checked under the 'Protection of Vulnerable Groups' (PVG) before starting work in the nursery.

We looked at how the service promoted the Scottish Government's policy, 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC). Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is the Scottish Government's approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for all children. We found that some staff had attended Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) training and in the main, could describe its role and function. **See areas for improvement.**

Areas for improvement

We found that staff's awareness of good practice guidance documents varied, for example, one staff member was unaware of Building the Ambition, others were unaware of Setting the Table. We know these documents are available on the current reading list. Management agreed to ensure staff used their development time to familiarise themselves with the information.

We noted the managers were aware of the importance of the service's role in supporting children in their care to achieve their full potential. We noted that some staff had attended GIRFEC training but not all. We also noted that some staff who had attended training were not familiar with all aspects of GIRFEC, for example their awareness of the role of the named and lead persons. The managers were aware that all staff should become familiar with the GIRFEC guidelines and attend this training as soon as this was available.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

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

At this inspection we found that the performance of the service for this statement was very good.

We noted families had the opportunity to feedback about their nursery experiences through exit questionnaires upon leaving the service. We noted how responses were given due attention and suggestions and constructive criticisms were positively addressed.

During our inspection, we noted management was well-respected and how comfortable staff, parents and children appeared when approaching them. The managers' office was located within the reception area and proved to be a lively hub, where staff and parents could seek time to meet and speak with the managers. The newly updated open door policy reflected the very good practice we witnessed.

The parents we spoke with commented:

"I am sure they (the management) would take suggestions on board - I feel very open with what I can say."

"Nikki and Frances (managers) have been very supportive."

"Management very friendly."

"Management always available."

"Management always take time to talk with you."

Information in relation to this quality statement has been included in Quality Theme 1 - Statement 1.

Areas for improvement

Please refer to Quality Theme 1 - Statement 1.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

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

We sampled a range of evidence and found the service's performance to be of a very good standard in relation to this Quality Statement.

We noted in Quality Theme 1 - Statement 1, the wide variety of systems in place supporting on-going consultation with children and their parents, enabling them to comment on the service and make suggestions for improvement and development. Parents were also able to participate in nursery life through their involvement in on-going programmes of improvement projects. We spoke with parents informally during our inspection. They commented:

"We feedback quarterly or six-monthly our suggestions for improvement. Information is collated and made available to parents. They meet parents' suggestions."

"I am sure they (management) would take suggestions on-board. They have been very open as to what I have to say."

Fifteen respondents to our Care Standards Questionnaire strongly agreed and seven agreed, the service had involved them and their child in developing the service by asking them for their views and feedback. Our observations and the evidence we gathered demonstrated how well staff tried to involve children and their families.

Fifteen respondents strongly agreed and seven agreed that overall they were happy with the quality of care their children received in the service. Parents commented:

"My child always loves to come."

"Really pleased all round with the care provided and management."

We found the manager and staff team engaged and participated positively and knowledgeably during the inspection process. We acknowledge how well the management team received our feedback, demonstrating their keenness for making continuous improvements.

Management described and evidence confirmed the regular audits they carried out to ensure continuous improvement and quality were maintained. For example, daily audits were carried out in relation to medications taken in and out of the premises. We noted accidents and incidents as well as first aid provisions were audited monthly and how systems were in place to identify and rectify areas posing issue. These procedures helped to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing.

We noted how staff were included in consultations and where appropriate, their suggestions taken forward. The owner/provider regularly met staff to discuss their individual agendas, demonstrating how management valued them as employees.

We noted that an Improvement Plan for 2014 - 2015 was in place with specific

areas for development designated to staff members. Some of the identified priorities had already been addressed; others were underway. These improvement aims would help contribute positively towards children's overall learning and development.

The nursery's mission statement and aims were displayed within the reception area for parents and visitors to read. Our observations and records confirmed how staff, on the whole, worked in accordance with the aims, focusing on the individual child and their care, ensuring their development and support needs were the main priority. Parents commented:

"I cannot fault the care and attention that the staff have given my son during his time at Great Western Pre-school (Portlethen)."

"I have always felt they have my children's best interests at heart!"

A complaints policy was in place should parents or carers have any issues regarding the service. This informed them of how to raise any concerns in confidence and who they should contact, should they choose not to address concerns directly to the service.

Areas for improvement

We recognise the improvements management have already identified and carried out and their commitment to improving outcomes for children. They must continue to carry out regular and in-depth audits within the service in order to maintain and build on this very good practice.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

There is no additional information.

9 Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

To find out more

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