

Centre Playgroup Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 June 2023

Service provided by:
Centre Playgroup Management

Service provider number:
SP2003001203

Service no:
CS2003005717

About the service

Centre Playgroup is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 35 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. The playgroup provider is a committee of volunteer parents and carers. The playgroup works in partnership with Glasgow City Council to provide early learning and childcare. Centre Playgroup is located in a community centre in the Mount Vernon area of Glasgow. The service is close to schools, transport routes and other amenities. Children were accommodated within a central playroom hall that led directly to a secure outdoor play space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place on 31 May 2023 between 08:15 and 14:45. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with children using the service and reviewed survey responses from five parents whose children attend the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefited from a staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- Positive working relationships between the management team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing play experiences for children.
- Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.
- The manager's leadership approach had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes enabled the service to deliver quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question as we found performance where there was a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. The strengths had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We looked at how the service's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their knowledge of child development, GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) and the well-being indicators resulted in children's individual needs being met. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.

Staff worked closely with families, involving them in decisions about their child's care and development. This enabled the relevant staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. Staff were skilled in using the information in children's personal plans to meet their needs. Personal plans and learning story journals using the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators and the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence were regularly reviewed and included targets for achievement and next steps. Staff told us how they worked with parents to ensure personal plans included the key information needed to provide appropriate care, meet any medical needs and take forward children's learning and play interests. One parent commented: "It's difficult to truly articulate the excellent person-centred care my son receives. The team, especially his key worker, have got to know him and what matters to him. They always use this information to provide care that is centred around him." Another parent told us: "We get regular emails keeping us up to date with what is going on and we get regular and thorough updates through the learning journals app. We have also had stay and play sessions, parents' meetings and incredibly detailed written reports updating us on the children's progress."

We discussed with the manager how plans and records for children with identified additional support needs required to be closely monitored to ensure they took more account of multidisciplinary assessments and inputs. This will support a personal planning approach which is solution focused with clear, current strategies for supporting children through personal challenges to make developmental progress.

1.3 Play and learning

We found that staff worked hard to provide a variety of quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements. We found that children's voice was highly valued. Staff took time to extend conversations with children about their play and used well-timed open ended questioning to further extend and challenge thinking and learning. We found that staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences. Through discussion, it was evident that experienced staff had a shared understanding of child development and early years pedagogy and used this to scaffold and shape the breadth and depth of children's learning. Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn. One parent commented: "I have found all of the staff to be really nurturing and kind towards the children."

They provide them with a wide variety of experiences and support them well through the early level curriculum."

We discussed with staff strategies for developing children's sense of ownership of leading change related to their self chosen play projects. Staff agreed that more flexible use of planning tools based on observations of children's most engaging and involving play experiences could strengthen existing opportunities for children to shape their play environments. This can extend opportunities for staff to reflect on when children display deep level engagement in their play and support them to provide greater autonomy and choice as to how this will be taken forward.

We highlighted the value of staff continuing to develop their skills in identifying the significant learning of each child as they observe them at play. This will ensure that they are able to identify what each child needs to learn next. We identified a need to ensure these next steps were specific, so the progress children make is measurable.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question as we found performance where there was a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. The strengths had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children had daily access to outdoor play. Children spoke to us about the fun they had in the outdoor play area, surrounding park, sports arena, on woodlands walks as well as the community garden. The management committee had purchased a balance bike which provided children with opportunities to develop their gross motor skills, spatial awareness, co-ordination, listening and following instructions and road safety awareness. As part of funding sourced by the provider, a small fenced off area attached to the hall had recently been improved including the addition of a gate allowing children's supervised access to a community garden. We highlighted risk assessments that could be introduced that would support and widen children's daily access to this shared space. This will increase opportunities for children to benefit from play experiences located within it including: a mud kitchen, playhouse, climbing wall, obstacle steps, wooden pirate ship, and planting and growing activities. Outdoor play in different environments can encourage young children to move their body in different ways and widen opportunities to learn through their sensory and physical experiences.

Staff worked well together to ensure that both indoor and outdoor environments were safe and secure for children. Staff told us the children had worked together to develop the playgroup's "Golden Rules" and almost all of the children understood that this was for their personal safety during play. Appropriate infection prevention and control procedures were also in place. Risk assessment and cleaning schedules were completed regularly which helped minimise risk to children.

We highlighted and staff agreed that more regular planned outdoor play opportunities within parks or woodland spaces beyond the setting would further increase opportunities for children to experience fresh air and enjoy challenging play. The manager agreed to make this a focus of future improvement and professional development planning.

We found that the organisation, layout and available resources within the main playroom hall needed to be reviewed. Staff told us that they regularly evaluated and reflected on the quality of children's play spaces. We identified a need for these shared reflections to focus more closely on how setting up and monitoring of each play area can lead to challenging and engaging shared play opportunities for children. We identified a need for more clearly defined play areas that offered a wider range of types of play experience. For example, we found loose parts materials and construction materials could have been available in far greater quantity to support children's collaborative play. We identified a need for spaces to be adapted to support children to relax for quieter activities such as storytelling or sensory experiences. Acoustic arrangements within the spacious main playroom hall with its high ceiling were not conducive to a calm environment which supported children's concentration or learning. We discussed with staff changes to daily routines as well as resources, layouts and sound dampening measures that could help to ensure that children using this space experienced reduced levels of intrusive noise.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We found that staff were motivated, well led and passionate about improving outcomes for all children. Staff told us how the manager provided a clear focus for their shared team work including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. We found that the team worked together effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. They were keen to take forward current ideas, develop and implement best practice guidance. This resulted in children experiencing quality interactions and play experiences centred around their emerging interests.

The manager told us how a nationally recognised self-evaluation tool was used to reflect on staff practice and support them to collaborate on improvement planning. The manager told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. This feedback had been used to support the development of an improvement plan that clearly set out the service priorities and targets for change. We highlighted practical consultation strategies for widening parental engagement in the improvement planning process. The staff agreed these would help strengthen the capacity of service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices.

Positive working relationships between the management committee, manager and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing quality play experiences for children. The manager had created conditions where experienced staff felt confident to initiate changes and share responsibility for the process.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff felt well supported by the manager and told us that they felt able to approach them with any concerns. Staff worked well together and supported each other. This helped to contribute to a happy and welcoming atmosphere. Recently appointed staff told us that they had been made to feel welcome. In general, effective staff deployment across the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff, throughout almost all parts of the day.

Staff were given opportunities to take on leadership roles in areas of the curriculum in which they had identified a particular interest or strength. These included key curricular areas such as numeracy and literacy. In addition, staff had responsibility for delivering a PATHs programme to promote the children's development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The distributive management style fostered by the manager offered opportunities for staff to become confident in progressing new developments and enhanced positive outcomes by increasing the range of approaches available to meet children's individual needs.

We identified a number of adaptations to staffing arrangements during lunchtime routines which would ensure minimum adult to child ratios were met at all times and best practice meal time practices were consistently followed (see Area for improvement 1). These can help realise the playgroup's commitment to providing a safe, more relaxed and nurturing environment for children during lunchtimes. This will increase opportunities for staff to be responsive to individual needs and support children to develop positive attachments with key adults. We signposted the manager to our practice note "Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)" to support professional reflection on mealtime improvements within the staff team.

Areas for improvement

1.
To support high quality interaction and engagement with children across the nursery day the provider must review and improve the lunch time experience. This should ensure there are sufficient staff available during this time to provide opportunities to build relationships between children and key workers, encourage communication as well as ensure children receive the support they need.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as a relaxed atmosphere as possible" (HSCS 1.35) and; "People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me" (HSCS 3.16).

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

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