

Spring Kinloss Day Care of Children

Burghead Road
Kinloss
Forres
IV36 3SX

Telephone: 01309 690 817

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 July 2024

Service provided by:
Action for Children

Service provider number:
SP2003002604

Service no:
CS2016350947

About the service

Spring Kinloss is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 100 children at any one time aged from birth to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 12 are under two years of age.

The service operates from a one level building with all three rooms having direct access to a secure, outdoor play area. It is located within the grounds of a military base and has use of an adjacent playing field. The service is provided by Action for Children.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 July 2024, between 8.45am and 4.30pm. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with six children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from 25 families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches which contributed to them feeling loved and secure.
- Play experiences supported children's developing language, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Resources took account of children's age and stage of development, supporting them to develop a broad range of skills.
- Temporary arrangements for management of the service had contributed to positive outcomes for children and families.
- Interactions between staff were respectful, which supported a positive ethos and impacted positively on children's experiences.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support them throughout their day. Staff responded to their cues, offering cuddles and reassurance when children were tired or upset, supporting them to manage their emotions. This contributed to children feeling loved and secure.

Personal planning information was used effectively, supporting children's overall wellbeing. Parents and carers regularly shared information that may have impacted on their children. One parent commented "The staff are very approachable and go out of their way to support the individual needs of each child". Staff recorded significant information to ensure that all staff were aware of individual children's circumstances. We discussed with the management team ensuring that any strategies in place to support children were clearly recorded, to further ensure consistency in approaches to care.

Arrangements for sleep were very well considered. Thorough processes around infection prevention control, monitoring of children, and current routines contributed to children benefiting from quality sleep and rest. This supported children's safety and emotional security, and promoted good habits around sleep.

Mealtimes were relaxed and calm experiences for all children. All staff understood their roles and responsibilities at snack and lunchtime, which meant that staff were available to children and not distracted. Some staff ate with the children, supporting healthy eating habits. They recognised these routines as an opportunity to support children's developing language and communication skills, engaging them in discussion about food, what they had been doing and what they might do later in the day. Meals provided were healthy and nutritious, staff followed clear processes to ensure that all cultural and dietary needs were understood and managed well. Some children had opportunities to develop their independence skills, through pouring drinks, and self-selecting accompaniments. As a result, children benefited from positive, sociable experiences.

Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children protected from harm and safe. The management team had clear processes in place to evaluate staff's understanding, this contributed to children being safe and healthy.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children were actively leading their play and having fun. Staff were responsive to their play invitations, facilitating play when necessary. Children were able to choose where they wanted to play for most of the day. This supported their developing independence.

The range of resources throughout the setting supported children's developing imagination, curiosities and problem solving skills. There was a wide variety of loose parts and natural materials in all areas. Children spent long periods of time investigating and exploring these which enriched their play and learning.

Play experiences supported children's **developing language, literacy and numeracy skills**. Staff introduced song and rhyme throughout the day, during play and daily tasks, **supporting younger children's brain development and their understanding of language**. Staff repeated words, gave children time to respond, and spoke about past and future events, explaining new words to support children's understanding. We discussed with the management team increasing the use of print throughout the setting, to support children to make connections between letters and words and beginning to read. Some staff were skilled at introducing mathematical language, such as shape, number and movement, into play experiences. As a result, children were learning a broad range of life long skills.

Planning approaches were child centred. Staff were **responsive to children's interests**, creating learning experiences that were relevant to them. There was a **good balance of responsive and intentional planning**, with staff recognising where gaps might exist. Staff **recognised children's varying play types**, and provided resources to support and extend these. For example, when children were fascinated with water play, there were a variety of opportunities to explore this. This meant that children were engaged and developing skills that were relevant to them.

The quality of observations for older children was not always consistent. Some were clear and linked to developmental milestones, with appropriate next steps identified. However, some were more descriptive with no learning detailed. Not all children had recent observations in their learning online learning journeys. Approaches to evaluate children's progress were being developed, to ensure that all children were supported to meet their potential. The management team had identified this as an area for improvement. They told us they would soon be introducing new processes to improve the current systems in place.

Observations for younger children were linked to **health and well being indicators and Realising the Ambition**; this supported staff to identify next steps that were relevant for each child. This contributed to children developing lifelong learning skills.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

The playrooms were **clean, tidy and well ventilated, with plenty of natural light**. This created a **calming environment for children**. All three playrooms provided children with ample space for their needs, which told them that they mattered.

Children were playing with a **wide variety of real life items which enhanced the homely feel of each room**. There was some attention to homely details such as plants and decoration. There is scope to build on this to provide all children with a warm and welcoming environment.

Resources, **both inside and in the enclosed garden area**, took account of children's age and stage of **development**. Younger children were supported to develop their gross motor skills through exploring resources that allowed them to crawl up and down, and walk with support.

Staff were aware of when they needed to vary resources to ensure they met the needs of children. Older children benefited from a **large play area** that offered a wide variety of play and learning experiences, such as mud kitchens, construction and ride on toys. As a result, they were **developing a broad range of skills**.

Overall, infection prevention control measures were effective in reducing the spread of infection. The management team were in the process of making plans to change the layout within the nappy changing room, to meet with best practice guidance. Staff understood their role in maintaining a clean and safe environment for children, following clear procedures to **support high standards of infection prevention control**. This contributed to keeping **children safe and healthy**. However, we discussed the importance of continuing to monitor children's hand washing as not all children were supported to do this effectively.

Staff were mindful of where children were within the setting at all times, undertaking regular headcounts and updating visual reminders. They **encouraged children to take risk in their play, without compromising children's experiences**. This supported children to have **challenging and enjoyable experiences**.

How good is our leadership? **5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Temporary management arrangements were **supporting very good outcomes for children and families**. The deputy manager had stepped up to the position of manager over the previous six months. They were **passionate about their role**, and about ensuring that **children received the care and support that was right for them**. A new manager had been recruited and was due to join the team shortly.

The views of children and families were valued. There were a number of opportunities for them to give feedback and share their thoughts, for example, through questionnaires, in person and via the Family app. Improvement planning took account of their views, supporting them to be **meaningfully involved in the life of the setting**.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes and procedures were supporting improved outcomes for children and families. The acting manager and the staff team were using best practice guidance, such as Realising the Ambition and How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare, to evaluate their practice. They worked with other professionals, and had made links with other settings to support them in **developing their practice**. This meant that children were **receiving care and support based on relevant evidence and best practice**.

Staff had the opportunity to reflect together, using these **reflections to influence positive change for children**. They were confident in reviewing any changes made, such as the **layout of the environment**, considering the impact on children's experiences. As a result, children and families benefited from a **culture of continuous improvement**.

How good is our staff team? **5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff were committed to their roles and had developed strong relationships with children and their families. Some parents commented:

"My child is very happy going there. The staff are always friendly and welcoming."

"The staff are always very approachable, friendly and always willing to help answer any questions or help in any way they can."

"Open and honest staff."

The setting was effectively staffed to meet the needs of children. There was a good mix of **skills, knowledge and experience in staff groups** in each of the playrooms. **More experienced staff supported newer staff as they learnt new skills, and developed their practice.** Interactions between staff were **respectful, which supported a positive ethos.** This impacted positively on children's experiences.

Staffing arrangements ensured children received continuity of care. Consideration had been given to busier times of the day, such as mealtimes. This meant that staff received appropriate breaks to keep them refreshed, and that the quality of children's care and support was not affected.

Staff told us that they felt very well supported by the management team, through the current period of transition. They had **regular opportunities to meet formally and talk with** the acting manager, as well as on a daily basis. This **supported their personal wellbeing and the identification of any training needs** that arose. As a result, children **experienced high quality care and support** because staff had the necessary skills and resources.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

Following the appointment of a manager. A continuous, manageable and effective system of self evaluation should be established, that engages staff, parents and children in the improvement agenda.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve.' (HSCS 4.8).

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19)

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2019.

Action taken since then

Effective quality assurance and self evaluation processes and procedures were in place. These included the views of staff, parents and children. As result children were benefiting from care and support based on relevant evidence and best practice guidance. This area for improvement has been met.

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	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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