

Noah's Ark Nursery Day Care of Children

Johnstone Street
Bellshill
ML4 1DE

Telephone: 01698 740 722

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 March 2024

Service provided by:
Living Waters Church

Service provider number:
SP2010011016

Service no:
CS2010254754

About the service

Noah's Ark Nursery is registered to provide care for 55 children aged from birth to those not yet attending primary school. Eight children from birth to two years, 15 children from two to under three years and 32 children aged from three to those not yet attending primary school.

The premises are situated in a stand alone building within an industrial estate in Bellshill. Children are cared for within three separate playrooms and have access to an enclosed garden. The service is close to local amenities and bus routes.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 March 2024. We provided feedback to the service on Tuesday 5 March 2024. 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 children using the service
- reviewed feedback from 17 families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff knew children well and had developed warm, caring relationships with them to support their wellbeing and help them feel valued, safe and secure.
- Children benefitted from regular access to outdoor play spaces.
- Staff communicated well with colleagues and worked as a team. This helped to keep children safe.
- To improve the quality of children's play experiences, further work was needed in relation to developing resources and play spaces. Promoting curiosity and imagination through free play, open ended materials and loose parts play.
- The provider should review nappy changing/toilet facilities and make necessary improvements.
- Quality assurance processes and self evaluation were at an early stage and should now be developed and embedded into practice to ensure they are meaningful and effective.
- To ensure positive outcomes for children, management should monitor and review the deployment of staff in general and over key times.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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 found several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this key question as good.

1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were kind and had a calm, gentle manner which supported children to feel safe and secure. Staff interactions were caring, warm and responsive to children's needs. Staff made positive efforts to ensure they were at children levels when supporting and interacting with them. When asking children what they liked about their nursery, they replied "happy place, my friends, my teachers" and "when you hurt yourself the ladies look after you and make you better."

Staff knew children well and could talk about different individual needs of children and were aware of how to support children. They shared how they gathered information about children's needs and how they planned for them as individuals. Parents told us "staff are very accommodating to our needs and know my child inside out, [they] like routine and set tasks and staff ensure to engage with [them] on [their] level and make [their] learning experience comfortable adapting where necessary for [them]" and "individualised care for every child in a very nurturing manner. They listen and act upon any worries or concerns and the wellbeing of my child is always their main focus."

Personal plans were in place for all children. Children with additional support needs had very detailed personal plans that supported their progression and development within the service. These plans contained clear strategies to support and enhance children's learning. However, not all plans had the same level of detail. We asked the service to ensure that personal plans contained clear strategies to support all children's individual learning and development. Personal plans were frequently reviewed and next steps agreed with parents. Parents told us "the team have been pro active at implementing a structured plan to achieve the best possible outcome for my [child]" and "they regularly assess [my child's] needs and adjust any changes to [their] plan when required."

The service had recently reviewed mealtimes with an emphasis on providing more opportunities for children to be independent and develop their life skills. This included, a rolling snack and self serving their own food at lunchtime. We discussed with the service how this could be further developed, providing further opportunities for children's independence to be supported within all playrooms. For example, younger children self serving their lunches. Staff should also consider their positioning at mealtimes, to ensure they are sitting alongside children to create a warm, relaxed and sociable experience.

Staff were aware of children's individual needs and sleep arrangements reflected safe sleep practice. Younger children were supported to sleep within their own playrooms. Staff recognised their cues and were responsive to these. However, consideration should be given to how older children's needs can be met within their own playrooms. For example, developing spaces for children to sleep or rest within the 3-5 room according to their own needs.

Medication was mostly stored appropriately, clearly labelled and easily accessible. We asked the service to ensure all prescribed creams were stored appropriately. For example, prescribed skin cream.

The service should develop an audit of all medication stored within the setting, to ensure an accurate record of medication stored on premises.

1.3: Play and learning

Children played happily with their friends, while younger children were content playing on their own or alongside others. We observed staff praising and celebrating children's achievements. We discussed with management on reviewing reward systems in place for all children. Management agreed to review this and ensure practice was reflective of current best practice/guidance. Parents told us they liked the nurture their children received, commenting "staff have my child's wellbeing and best interests at heart."

Children were having fun during their play and had access to a range of play spaces. Play areas were generally well resourced, however consideration should be given to maximising play opportunities. For example, ensuring a wide range of blocks within block play area and a range of resources within all areas to support literacy and numeracy skills

Whilst children could move freely within the playrooms, consideration should be given to how a true free flow between indoors and outdoors could be fostered. On the day of inspection, all children accessed the garden as a large group, to enable staff and 'lunch helpers' to prepare for lunches. We asked the manager to review and develop daily routines so they don't restrict children's play opportunities, whilst also recognising children's right to play.

Staff were cheerful, smiley and mostly engaged well with children. However, while staff interactions were warm and caring, there were several missed opportunities for staff to use skilled questioning to support children's learning through meaningful conversations. Management should provide opportunities to support staff to develop their skills, confidence and knowledge in supporting and extending children's play. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Children benefitted from a blend of planning in the moment and planned approaches. Staff were using their observations of children to follow their interest or 'spark', which they observed, to promote children's learning through a range of active, experimental opportunities. As a result, children were mostly engaged in play and were progressing well in their overall development. Parent told us "My [child] has come on so well through the play based learning the nursery staff focus on and [they] loves [their] time at Noah's Ark."

Areas for improvement

1. To support staff to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of children's play, learning and development, the manager should arrange for staff to undertake related professional development activities. Staff should then reflect on their learning and embed it in their practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which states: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14)

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

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

2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a warm and welcoming ethos within the nursery. One parent told us "I feel that the setting is homely and happy with a warm welcome."

Children benefitted from cosy areas within the playrooms. For example, large comfortable chairs for children and staff to snuggle together, which supported attachments and enclosed space to relax and rest within. Homely touches such as displays, soft furnishing and materials in neutral colours helped create a calm and nurturing environment for children. However, consideration should be given to use of lightening to brighten some play spaces.

Play areas had been generally well considered and took account of children's interests and development. Children had access to a range of play resources to support their play. We discussed with the service how consideration should be given to the invitations to learning within playrooms. This would include adding further toys and materials to ensure children are appropriately challenged and consistently experience high-quality play and learning experiences. For example, the book corner and block play area within 3-5 room could be further enhanced to promote creativity, curiosity and imagination. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Health and wellbeing was promoted through outdoor play experiences. The 3-5 garden had seen some recent changes, that included the development of growing areas and a well resourced mud kitchen to support children's natural curiosity. However, we found the outdoor space for younger children had limited play opportunities. The service should continue to further develop their outdoor area to support children's overall development. For example, further development of loose parts play outdoors would help support learning experiences that stimulates curiosity, exploration and risky play.

To ensure children receive care in a well maintained and clean environment, the overall cleanliness and maintenance of the nursery should be reviewed. Particular emphasis should be placed on the condition and cleanliness of the toilets and changing area. For example, ensuring all extractor fans in bathroom are clean and repairing conditions of cracked and flaking walls. (See Area for Improvement 2)

Infection control procedures overall were contributing to keeping children safe, such as effective handwashing. However, some infection prevention and control practices needed reviewed to prevent the spread of infection. For example, the storage of used nappies. The provider and management should review this to ensure a safe environment. This would ensure infection control procedures were maintained.

Areas for improvement

1. To help ensure children experience a stimulating, safe and well managed setting, management and staff should regularly audit the environment. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring high quality resources are available indoors and outdoors to support natural curiosity, creativity and imagination, in a safe and well maintained environment.

This is to ensure care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.' (HSCS 2.27); and 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.' (HSCS 1.31)

2. To ensure children receive care in a clean and well-maintained environment, the provider should review and improve toilet facilities and the storage of soiled material.

This is to ensure that children's care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard's (HSCS), which state; 'my environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells' (HSCS 5.18) and 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.22).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

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

3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Management and staff worked together to ensure a positive ethos within the setting. Parents told us "the senior members of staff show great professionalism at all times and maintain a strong relationship with ourselves and our child." We discussed how this could be further enhanced by revisiting the vision, values and aims of the service to allow staff, parents and children to gain a collective understanding, purpose and commitment to the service. The new visions and values should reflect the current aspirations of the service for children, families, partners and the wider community.

Parents were kept informed of nursery life through newsletters. Parents took part in play and stay sessions and tea mornings. These provided opportunities for families to be involved in their child's nursery. However, parents were not yet welcomed into the building when dropping off or collecting their children from nursery. Parents told us "it would be good for parents to get back in to the nursery" and "communication to parents could be better." We discussed with the manager on reviewing opportunities to welcome parents into the building, this would help support positive relationships, connections and include parents more fully in the life of the setting. This would also help with effective feedback to parents on children's day, experiences and important information.

The service was at the early stages of supporting staff with leadership and champion roles. For example, outdoor play and senior roles. This style of leadership could support staff's individual strengths and skills, whilst also contributing to improved experiences for children. We discussed with the service how this could be progressed.

The management team were approachable and engaged well within the inspection process. Staff felt supported by the management team and that their views and suggestions mattered. Regular team meetings provided staff with opportunities to discuss practice. We discussed with the service how staff meetings could be more effective to support practice, providing opportunities for staff to identify and take forward areas for improvement.

The service had a quality assurance calendar in place. However, the processes were not yet regular or robust to ensure procedures were consistently followed to ensure sustained improvements. Robust monitoring systems, including self evaluation, need to be more firmly embedded with a focus on monitoring children's personal plans, children's experiences, monitoring of staff practice and auditing of medication. This will help ensure improvements are sustained and children continually benefit from a service that improves. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Accident and incidents systems were in place to support a safe environment for children. We discussed improving the auditing systems to ensure these were effective in identifying any patterns within the space and any actions needed.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, management should implement robust quality assurance processes, including self evaluation covering key areas of practice. This should include but is not limited to children's personal plans, children's play and learning experiences, staff practice and medication.

This is in order to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

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

4.3: Staff deployment

The staff team were enthusiastic and committed to the role they played in caring for children. They were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with the children. Parents spoke positively of the staff team describing them as "friendly, approachable, respectful, kind, caring and considerate" and "their passion for their work shines through in the children they care for."

The service was appropriately staffed to provide care to children. However, while adult/child ratios were being maintained, we found that the deployment of staff should be considered to ensure a range of skills, knowledge and expertise within playrooms. This would provide opportunities for staff to mentor and role model best practice and support the development of skills and knowledge of new staff. (See Area for Improvement 1)

The staffing model in place meant that staff mostly worked within the same room, ensuring children were familiar with staff and supported continuity of care. We discussed with the service on ensuring that children were not unnecessarily moved from their secure space (playroom) to another space to support ratios or daily routines. For example, all children joining up together at the start and end of the day or when some children are sleeping. The service should consider the impact this can have on children and their attachments. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Staff communicated regularly with each other, which helped ensure children could be supervised and information was shared to ensure children needs were being met in general. For example, staff breaks took place with little disruption to children's experiences. This supported them to rest and recharge, supporting their health and wellbeing. However, some staff did not take a break during their shift. We discussed the importance of all staff having opportunities to take breaks to ensure they are well, ready and emotionally available to care for children.

Management regularly provided support for staff to support their wellbeing. One staff member shared with us "I have the upmost respect for [manager] as [they] always ensures staff wellbeing is paramount as well as the children. [They] supports staff on a daily basis and encourages us to work to our full potential. [They] are approachable and respectful in everything [they] do."

Annual appraisals for all staff took place to highlight their strengths and training needs. We discussed with management how staff would benefit from further training opportunities on child development to support their practice. Management agreed that further training would support staff's awareness of children's play and child development. Staff also told us "we would like to improve our skill set. More courses would be beneficial to support staff knowledge to improve learning for children" and "more opportunities to fulfil staff's training preferences."

Staff received a basic induction covering some important information about the service. However, greater opportunities for regular reflection and support would help identify any gaps in staff skills and knowledge. Management and staff would benefit from the use of the National Induction Resource. We signposted the manager to where to find this. They agreed this would be of benefit.

Management and staff engaged very well with us and were confident, open and professional in their discussions, receptive to feedback and willing to make improvements to ensure good outcomes for children.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure positive outcomes and consistency of care for children the provider and management should monitor and review the deployment and positioning of staff to ensure these support children's choices, independence and meet their individual needs.

This includes but is not limited to, ensuring a balance of staff skills, experience and knowledge in playrooms and reviewing procedures at key points of the day, such as beginning and end of day.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state, 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19) and 'I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity.' (HSCS 4.16)

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

The service should ensure they provide healthy meals and snacks that include fresh fruit and vegetables.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states as a child, 'I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.' (HSCS 1.33).

This area for improvement was made on 12 December 2018.

Action taken since then

The service have reviewed their menus, ensuring a wide variety of healthy meals and snacks that include fruit and vegetables.

Therefore 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	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate

How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate

How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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