

Chimes Playgroup Day Care of Children

East & Old Parish Church
East High Street
Forfar
DD8 2EG

Telephone: 07985 370 066

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 March 2024

Service provided by:
Chimes Playgroup Committee

Service provider number:
SP2003000556

Service no:
CS2003002836

About the service

Chimes Playgroup is a registered daycare of children services situated within the centre of Forfar. The service is provided by Chimes Playgroup Committee and is registered to a maximum of 32 children from the age of 2 years to those not yet attending primary school.

Children are cared for in dedicated rooms on the second floor, where they have access to a hall space, large playroom, toilets and space for group activities. The playgroup also has access to a garden space at the church hall.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 March 2024 between 09:45 and 15:30. 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 throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children and four parents using the service
- spoke with the manager and staff team
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Staff provided a warm, welcoming and caring environment.

Children were provided with regular opportunities to explore their local community.

There were opportunities for children to appropriately develop their skills and explore their interests.

Children were cared for by skilled, passionate and knowledgeable staff.

The provider should ensure information is documented appropriately to support staff practice and children's overall wellbeing.

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

Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled and had fun throughout the session. Staff were kind, caring and gentle. Trusting relationships had been built with children, they were confident to approach staff to join in with their play. This supported children to feel safe and secure.

Individual personal plans were in place for children. These were informally reviewed with parents. Staff told us of specific strategies to support and meet children's needs. These had been informally discussed with parents and were not reflected in children's plans. This could result in strategies not being used consistently to support children. We signposted the service to the 'Guide for providers on personal planning, Early Learning and Childcare' to identify improvements. Documenting information appropriately would help to ensure that children's care and support was relevant and effective. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Staff knew the children who required medication well and informally shared important information with each other. Medication forms required reviewing to ensure important information, such as medication received prior to attending, was documented appropriately. We signposted the service to 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services'. This would ensure children's medical needs are clear and accurate information is shared in the event of an emergency. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Nappy changing was a nurturing experience for children. Staff interacted positively and supported children's understanding of the nappy changing routine. To ensure children's dignity and respect was consistently provided during intimate care, the service planned to use a separate space within the toilet area.

Staff were knowledgeable and confident in child protection procedures. A policy was in place, with a flow chart on display. The service had established good links with other services and were proactive when reaching out for support when needed. Chronologies were in place for children, however this information was not stored in individual files or available to all staff. We signposted the service to 'Practice guide to Chronologies' to support chronology procedures within the service. This will ensure that it is clear to staff when to offer families support or follow policies and procedures. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Children experienced a sociable, relaxed and unhurried lunchtime. Staff sat with children to have their own lunch, promoting good eating habits. A variety of conversations took place which included children's interests, for example, children were telling jokes from their yoghurt pots and jokes they were able to recall. Children had opportunities to influence their breakfast menu choices and had trips to the supermarket to buy breakfast foods. This allowed them to have ownership in mealtime routines. One child told us "I like when I can put it in the bowl, but sometimes the adults did this". We discussed with staff where further opportunities to develop children's independence could be supported, for example pouring their drinks and using child sized utensils at mealtimes.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and Learning

Children were happy and had good opportunities to lead their play. There was a balance of planned and spontaneous play, which impacted positively on children's development and wellbeing. Resources were easily accessible and at children's height. Loose parts and real objects promoted children's curiosity and imagination.

Staff were passionate and knowledgeable about child centred planning approaches and how to support group and individual interests more effectively. Next steps had been identified for some children. One parent told us "I think the staff are lovely and have helped her come on, especially with her talking". This could be developed further by identifying individual next steps where needed, capturing children's progress and achievement, supporting children to meet their full potential. Children's views and voice could be seen throughout their learning environment. Staff were responsive to children's interests, offering opportunities to extend learning appropriately.

Learning journals contained observations of children's learning and progress. Some observations were descriptive rather than capturing the learning. Staff should be supported to enhance observation recording, to create consistency throughout the team.

Children had daily opportunities to explore their outdoor learning environment. They were encouraged to follow their interests and given time to problem solve, for example, experimenting with water to make puddles and splashing. Staff engaged in these play opportunities with children, where the children laughed and had fun while they played. Children were supported to build their problem-solving skills and to express their emotions through play. Children experienced good connections with their local community, through opportunities to visit the local library, castle, supermarkets and church activities. This helped children to develop confidence and a sense of connection with their learning environment and the wider community.

Areas for improvement

1. 1. To ensure children's needs, health and wellbeing are supported. The service should now support staff to ensure all information is gathered, documented appropriately and readily available for all staff to refer to. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Children's personal plans should be formally reviewed with parents at least every 6 months.
- b) Children's strategies are clear and documented for all staff to access the most up to date information.
- c) Sufficient information is gathered and recorded about children's medical requirements to enable the service to meet their needs and respond effectively in an emergency situation.
- d) Individual chronologies are in place for children where needed, containing clear and accurate information.
- e) Chronologies and relevant information should be stored in a safe and secure place, where all staff can access the information if required.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was well furnished, inviting and provided plenty of natural light. Children's play spaces had been well considered, were developed appropriately and reflected children's interests. The service had moved to a dedicated space within the church building. Staff shared with us that children's play opportunities had benefitted as they no longer had to pack some items away. One child told us "I like the Lego and all the books they have". This provided the children with a consistent and rich learning environment.

Children used spaces well, both indoors and outdoors. Staff were aware of the importance of outdoor play. As free flow access to their outdoor play area could not be provided due to location, staff worked hard at ensuring children had daily access to the outdoors. Children's health and wellbeing was supported with these daily opportunities to explore their outdoor space.

There were infection prevention control procedures in place, which met current best practice and supported a safe environment. Personal protective equipment was used appropriately. Children were supported to manage their own infection control measures through hand washing at key times of the day. Staff reminded children when needed, minimising the risk of spread of infection, keeping children safe.

Risk assessments were available throughout the service. These were reviewed informally annually. We discussed with the service the importance of dating documents when they have been reviewed. This would support staff practice and quality assurance processes, ensuring the most up to date assessment is used.

Children were supported to manage their own risk, through daily chats and discussions through play. The use of open-ended questions by staff encouraged children to consider risky play and how to keep themselves safe.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had vision, values and aims in place. These were planned for review in consultation with staff and parents. This would give staff and families an opportunity to share their expectations and would support them to feel valued.

A Facebook page used by the service provided opportunities to share key information and daily activities. One parent told us "We get to see pictures of what they have been doing on the page, it is really good". Parents' circumstances were considered when sharing information and other forms of communication were used as needed. This ensured all families felt part of the service and were included in their children's learning experiences.

The service gathered parents' views, using questionnaires and polls on the Facebook page. This ensured individual needs were met and the children and their families felt valued and respected. Stay and play sessions were well attended, these sessions were also used to review children's information. We discussed with the service to consider opportunities for individual meetings with parents. This would support parents to share their children's changing needs or strategies in confidence.

An improvement plan was in place and used well to identify improvements within the service. Improvements had an achievable timeline, and these were reviewed regularly to ensure the service was on track to meeting their targets. The service had developed weekly dedicated time to come together as a team and discuss the planning. A quality assurance calendar was in the early stages of development and had been adapted to ensure it was suitable for the service. Management was now confident to embed this within practice and recognised how this can support best practice, for example, auditing of systems to identify trends and gaps.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.3 staff deployment

Staff deployment allowed children to access the indoor and outdoor play areas available to them. This ensured children's play and learning was extended appropriately. Staff worked well together, they shared with us that they enjoyed their roles and working within the setting. A parent shared with us "The staff are like family, and they are great". This contributed to a positive atmosphere and provided children and families with a welcoming and happy ethos.

Staff became task orientated when children would have benefited from their attention and support when arriving back from outdoor play. All staff focused on supporting children with removing outdoor clothing, rather than providing comfort when needed. We discussed with management to consider how these busy times were managed to ensure all children were supported and their needs met.

New staff were recruited with the 'Safer Recruitment Through Better Recruitment' guidance. This ensured children were kept safe through these recruitment procedures. New staff were well supported through attending settling in visits to the service. Management shared with us that this worked well, allowing the new member of staff time to get to know the children and routines. The 'Early Learning and Childcare-National Induction Resource' support a robust induction programme.

Staff were enthusiastic and committed to developing their knowledge and skills. A variety of professional development opportunities, including training and undertaking further qualification, had resulted in a staff team who have developed their practice and confidence. This had impacted positively on outcomes for children and the quality of their experiences.

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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