

Green Apple Nursery Day Care of Children

18 Clydesdale Street
Hamilton
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 April 2024

Service provided by:
Green Apple Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2012011873

Service no:
CS2012309777

About the service

Green Apple Nursery is registered to provide care to 79 children aged from birth to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided from a large renovated detached house near the town centre of Hamilton, South Lanarkshire. It is close to local transport links, shops, a park and other amenities.

Children receive care across four separate playrooms, separated by their age and stage of development. Secure garden spaces are also accessible to children.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on the 4 and 5 April 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 and received feedback from 25 of their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children attending the service were happy, settled and had developed positive friendships with peers.
- Children were nurtured by friendly, kind and caring staff.
- Communication with families supported meeting children's needs.
- The nursery was bright, welcoming and well resourced.
- More detailed recordings of children's medical needs were needed to support their care.

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 received nurturing care from kind and compassionate staff. Cuddles, chatter and laughter were frequent, helping children feel loved and emotionally secure. Children told us that they liked coming to nursery saying, "you will have a lot of fun here" and "I love coming to Green Apple Nursery."

Children's wellbeing was supported through strong friendships with peers. Staff modelled positive social skills, teaching children to be kind and empathetic. Children told us "I have lots of friends here" and "if my friend was upset I'd give them a wee cuddle." A parent added, "my child really enjoys nursery and playing with their friends."

Families told us that they felt connected to the staff caring for their children. They were involved in planning their child's care and shared information that supported staff to meet children's needs. This was reflected in children's personal plans, an online app and during daily conversations at drop off and pick up times. One parent told us "the staff all care about my child and show a real interest" and another added, "there's a very positive and nurturing relationship with the staff."

Children's dignity and privacy was respected as staff attended to their personal care needs. Staff discreetly supported children to the toilet, sensitively helped them to wipe their noses and asked permission to change their nappies. This ensured children's comfort and promoted their rights.

Children's health was promoted through nutritional home cooked meals and snacks. The nursery cook knew children well and regularly adapted the menu to suit their tastes, dietary requirements and cultural needs. Children told us that the food was "so good", "yummy" and that the cook made the "best banana bread." All children had the opportunity to develop skills for life when eating as they fed themselves, selected food and cleared their plates. The youngest children benefited from relaxed eating experiences. In the three to five year old room, staff needed to reflect further on how to create a calm and sociable meal experience for children. For those children, lunch time was noisy and staff were often task focused instead of sitting with children to support them.

Staff could tell us about children's medical needs and some had received training on how to manage complex medical conditions. However, this was not always reflected in written records. This meant that there was the potential for confusion about when a child's medication should be administered. Additionally we found that some medicine was not labelled clearly, making it more difficult to access in an emergency. We have therefore made an area for improvement about this (see area for improvement 1).

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun as they participated in a variety of experiences which were developmentally appropriate and relevant to their interests. They had a sense of purpose as they busily played, developing their learning.

Parents commented positively on the range of play stating, "my little one is always up to different things, no day is the same" and "the nursery offers a wide range of activities that my child loves to get involved with."

The materials available to children encouraged them to be curious and creative within their play. Older children built detailed models using cable reels, cardboard, plant pots and wood. One child told us they had made a spaceship, whilst others discussed how tall and long their models were. Younger children were building strong connections in their brains as they explored using their senses. Particular favourites included, investigating spaghetti, oats, foam and sand.

Cosy book areas and song bags encouraged children to develop their imagination, language and communication. Children told us about familiar stories and sang their favourite songs. They said, "we have been reading the Hungry Caterpillar, he eats everything" and "I made a stick man with rice, flowers and corn flakes, it was so cool, just like the one in the book." The children's interest in story characters was further explored when children went a walk in the local woods looking for animals from the 'Gruffalo' story.

Outdoors, children were excited and engaged as they splashed in puddles, made castles in the sand pit and navigated the climbing wall. Children could choose to play outdoors in all weathers, developing their health and wellbeing. Staff had plans to develop a dressing area closer to the outdoor area. We agreed that this would be useful to support independence and ease of access for children. Children also regularly visited places in the local community, including parks, shops and green spaces. This helps children develop a sense of identity and confidence within different social environments.

Staff played alongside younger children, supporting them in their play. They praised children's achievements, made play suggestions to help extend thinking and helped them find the resources they needed. At times, children in the three to five years room would have benefited from increased staff interaction to progress their learning. Sometimes staff were too busy with other tasks to be able to support children's play fully.

Staff planned experiences to help children develop. This ensured they experienced a wide breadth of play and learning across the curriculum. To further support children to progress their learning, staff should observe children closely to identify and plan for their significant needs.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children's health needs are met, staff should make sure that medication records reflect children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that, 'my care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'any treatment or intervention that I receive is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

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 nursery was a bright welcoming and nurturing environment for children and families. Attractive displays of art work and photographs of children at play celebrated their achievements. This strengthened children's sense of belonging by making them feel like they mattered.

Cosy spaces and hiding nooks were available across the setting, supporting children's wellbeing. Comfortable couches, dens, rugs cushions and other soft furnishings created homely areas where children could relax, refresh and sleep during a busy nursery day. Staff understood the importance of sleep for children's overall development and ensured individual children's routines were followed to promote good sleep habits.

Toys and materials were easily accessible to children as they were stored in baskets and low level shelving in playrooms. This meant that children knew what was available to them, supporting them to make choices about their play. Children transported toys to different spaces, developing their ideas, imagination and solving problems. Children said "we've got lots of toy's here" and "some toys are new too, we get new things."

Overall, most play spaces were well structured and took account of children's interests and stage of development. They were well resourced with good quality toys and materials to support children's interest in learning. At times the three to five room was untidy and overstimulating, which contributed to increased noise within the environment. To support children's wellbeing and concentration during play, we asked staff to consider the volume of toys and layout of play spaces within that room.

A variety of measures were in place to keep children safe. These included, door finger guards, safe storage of hazardous materials and ensuring that children were accounted for at all times. We raised some minor concerns about unsafe storage of materials in the baby room garden. We were satisfied that action was taken to remove these hazards before the end of the inspection.

Some positive practices helped to prevent the potential spread infection. Children had developed skills for life as they confidently and independently washed their hands throughout the day. Staff undertook daily cleaning of surfaces, changing areas, bathrooms, floors and toys to keep the service generally clean. However, we advised that deep cleaning of some areas was necessary to maintain a clean and safe environment for children. The manager agreed to address this.

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

New leadership arrangements at the service meant that there was a shared managers role. This had been well planned and importance had been placed on embedding communication systems to ensure the smooth running of the service. The management team were enthusiastic and committed to improving outcomes for children.

Systems were in place to develop different aspects of the service. Some of these had been successful in supporting improvements for children. For example, audits of the environment had led to the development of a home role play area for children. Several children commented positively on this new play space. One said, "this bit is new and it has all the house stuff in it and I like it" and another told us "there's different good things in here for playing with."

Other monitoring processes needed to be reviewed and considered further in practice to ensure positive outcomes for children. These areas have been referenced throughout this report. They include, strengthening medication records and improving infection control and staff deployment at key times of the day.

Staff had a strong voice in developing the service. Management involved them in self-evaluation, developing their knowledge of best practice. Some staff had also been given the opportunity to visit other nurseries and to have professional discussions with other early years workers. This meant that staff were developing confidence in evaluating the quality of children's experiences, identifying where improvements were needed.

The nursery development plan was a good example of where improvements were identified in consultation with children and families. Although some of the work was in the early stages, other elements of the plan had been successfully progressed. For example, communication with families had been significantly improved through use of an online app.

Managers were keen to support staff development and did this through observations of practice, regular supervision meetings and induction processes. These helped to identify key areas of strength as well as identifying training that was needed. Although staff often accessed training, it was not always clear how this had impacted on improved outcomes for children. Management agreed to place a greater focus on evaluating training with staff to build understanding of how this could impact positively on children.

Families felt connected to the service and their ideas contributed to improvements. They told us, "the nursery regularly ask for parental involvement or suggestions to improve the service" and "I feel involved with any changes and developments that happen within the room." This meant that any changes made considered the needs of children. To support the development of future play spaces, we encouraged management to fully respect children's rights by consulting with children about what is important to them.

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 were friendly, caring, kind and committed to their roles. They worked well together creating a warm environment for children and families. Parents described staff as "welcoming", "helpful", "really nice" and "always there to guide me." Leaders supported staff wellbeing, contributing to retention of key staff and consistency for children.

Parents highlighted the positive relationships they had formed with their child's key worker. They felt able to approach them to share information about their child's needs. Photos displayed of staff and staffing information shared on social media strengthened families knowledge of who was caring for their child.

Communication systems with families were strong, supporting information sharing to meet children's needs. An online app was particularly well used by staff to communicate with parents and carers. Families told us that staff were responsive to messages, ensuring they had the information needed to provide care to children. They commented, "we really like the app to share high quality learning experiences and any updates individual to my child" and "there's good communication through the app."

The staff team communicated regularly about children's needs. Frequent team meetings provided time for detailed discussions about children's care. Day to day verbal communication supported children's safety and staff ability to meet changing needs.

For most of the day, staff were well deployed to respond to and meet children's needs. However, at key times, including the end of the day and lunch time, deployment could have been better. At these times, staff were busy doing other tasks, such as cleaning. This meant that children's needs were sometimes missed. We asked the management team to review this, placing children at the heart of plans.

Staffing rotas ensured there was a good mixture of staff skill and knowledge within each playroom. This contributed to a good quality of experience for children. Planned absences were well considered and staff willingly worked in other rooms when needed to meet children's needs. The positive addition of walkie talkies allowed staff to call for help when they needed additional support to care for children.

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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