

Doonvale Private Nursery School Day Care of Children

Doonholm Road
Alloway
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 May 2024

Service provided by:
Doonvale Private Nursery School LLP

Service provider number:
SP2003003640

Service no:
CS2003016384

About the service

Doonvale Private Nursery School is registered to provide a daycare of children's service to a maximum of 57 children at any one time: 14 children 0-under 2 years, 15 children 2 - under 3 years 28 children 3 years and over. On the first day of inspection, 54 children attended the service and 57 on the second day.

The service is located in Alloway, South Ayrshire and is in partnership with the local authority.

Children are cared for in three well-designed playrooms within a converted farmhouse. They have access to outdoor barns and a former orchard, known as the 'secret garden'.

The service is close to local amenities such as the library and post office.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 and 8 May between 9:30 and 17:30. 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 since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 12 children using the service and nine of their family
- spoke with 10 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed 24 family questionnaires
- reviewed and sampled documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and secure in the care of staff who knew them well.
- Staff were kind, caring and had a nurturing approach.
- Children experienced high quality learning experiences and were progressing well.
- The service provided high quality facilities and resources.
- The management team led the service well.
- Families were actively involved in developing the service.
- Staff were skilled and knowledgeable about children's needs.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very 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?

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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced high quality responsive, nurturing care and support. It was evident through observations that the principles of nurture were embedded in practice and at the heart of the service. This was supported by staff who interacted with children in a warm, sensitive and meaningful way. Children responded to staff by smiling and seeking reassurance when needed and it was evident that they were happy, confident and secure. This resulted in a caring and respectful ethos.

Staff had formed positive, trusting relationships with children and knew them very well. Staff who worked with younger children were sensitive to their individual care needs and responded to their routine at a pace that was right for them. All staff positioned themselves at children's level, used positive body language and calm voices and actively listened to what children had to say. Children were supported to express themselves and encouraged to talk about their emotions in an inclusive manner which respected their rights. This helped children feel secure in the service.

There was a strong focus on children's rights. This was embedded in practice and staff consistently asked children for permission to help and support them, whilst respecting their choices and preferences. Small reminders were displayed throughout the service stating articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Staff spoke about the importance of supporting and promoting children's rights. Their rights were integrated into their planning for children's learning. This sent a strong message to children that they matter.

Personal plans were up-to-date and reflected children's individual needs, including their routines, and stages of development. Staff were skilled in using the information within the plans to ensure children were well supported. This meant that children's nurture, care and support was responsive and reflected their individual needs. Daily routines were well established and children were familiar with transition times throughout the day including sleep, outdoor play and lunch time.

Lunch time was a relaxed, unhurried sociable experience for all children. Meals were appetising, nutritious and homemade. Children's preferences and allergies were known and the service had made provision for this including offering children alternative choices. Younger children were well supported during the lunchtime experience and were encouraged to eat independently and finish their meals through gentle reassurance and fun. Older children were encouraged to self-serve and pour their own water. Staff sat with the children and enjoyed the opportunity to talk about their interests and their day. We asked the service to further develop the lunchtime routine by encouraging children to be more independent, for example children could help set the table and clear their plates. This would support children's self-help skills and confidence.

1.3 Play and learning

The service had created a rich learning environment for children and had developed a strong emphasis to promote 'a love of learning'. This was evident throughout the service and was embedded in practice. The service had audited each playroom to ensure it was well equipped and designed to provide children with a range of equipment and resources to support and enhance their learning experiences. As a result, children experienced high quality learning experiences.

Children were actively engaged in their play and learning. They were leading their own play and making choices about how they wanted to spend their time. Children moved freely around the playrooms, and outdoor areas, taking ownership of their learning and following their interests and preferences. This enabled children to direct their own play.

Staff positioned themselves well to support children's play throughout the playrooms, and they responded to their thoughts and ideas. They extended children's learning through skilful interactions and open-ended questions. As a result, children were problem solving and thinking about solutions. Each playroom was very well resourced and supported children's age and stage of development. This allowed children to lead their own play and learning.

Children were using their imaginative and creative skills through sensory experiences including, arts and crafts, books, puppets and role play. Children were having fun with stories, words and rhymes. Staff were singing with the children and mixing songs together in a playful manner, knowing the children would enjoy the experience and correct them. This meant that children were having fun and learning through play.

There was a balance of child and staff led play experiences. Children could choose to join in with story time, singing, music and dance. Staff made learning fun and exciting. For example, staff used a science experiment to capture younger children's imagination and sense of wonderment. They used repetition and opportunities for children to explore, investigate and discover new play and learning experiences. This enabled children to play and learn through a range of different experiences.

Children in the Granary playroom had shown an interest in wrist watches and wanted to learn about time. Staff responded by introducing different types of watches, clocks and timers which sparked children's interests and curiosity. They were using a broad range of resources and books to learn about time. As a result, children were developing their skills in literacy and numeracy.

Children's learning was enhanced through regular walks around the nature path. This provided opportunities for children to be surrounded by nature and learn about flowers, birds and farm animals. Staff encouraged children to use their imagination about the 'footprints in the mud' to develop their language and thinking skills. Other outings included local walks to the library and post office. This meant that children benefitted from outdoor learning and made connections within the community.

Staff tracked children's progress and learning over time. There was breadth, balance and rich opportunities and experience for children to play and learn. Staff planned for children's learning and integrated this to include and reflect their interests and their spontaneous ideas. This meant that children were progressing well.

How good is our setting?

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a well-designed converted farm building which included two large covered play barns and three spacious playrooms. It was set within a country estate surrounded by nature and green spaces. This allowed them to make choices about where they wanted to play and enabled regular access to fresh air to support their wellbeing.

The service was warm, welcoming and inclusive. There was a calm ethos and the foyer was decorated with muted colours, natural materials and wall displays that depicted children's achievements. There was a security entry system which was monitored by staff. This helped keep children safe.

Each playroom was well ventilated with plenty of natural light. There was a calm, warm, inviting ethos within each of the playrooms enabling children to feel relaxed and secure. The playrooms were well organised and designed with defined learning areas for children to freely access.

Appropriately sized furniture and equipment reflected the different age groups and ensured children were comfortable and well supported. Cosy areas with soft furnishings and fairy lights had been created giving children a sense of calm and a safe place to rest and relax if they chose. Younger children had a quiet area to sleep with their individual sleep mats which supported their emotional wellbeing. As a result, children benefitted from a homely environment.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through outdoor play. Younger children played in a separate area designed for their age and stage of development. They had opportunities to play with water, sand and mud and participate in physical play. This encouraged them to actively move their bodies and develop their physical skills and co-ordination. Older children shared access to the Barn which was used in all weathers. This provided opportunities for energetic play enabling children to run, jump, climb and skip. This supported children's health and wellbeing through fresh air and regular exercise.

The 'secret garden' was a short walk from the service. Children were taken at scheduled times throughout the day. Children were risk assessing during their walk and upon arrival at the garden. Staff discussed a few hazards with the children and encouraged them to provide suggestions about how these could be managed. As a result, children were learning to assess risk and keep themselves safe.

Children enjoyed being in the natural environment as they had opportunities to explore and learn about nature. They planted flowers and vegetables, played in the den and role played in the mud kitchen. This meant that children had a range of opportunities to play and learn in a natural environment.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The management team led the service well. There was a strong commitment to embed nurture principles into daily practice and promote children's rights. Children and families were valued and at the heart of the service resulting in a positive ethos of inclusion.

The service had a clear vision which was to create a safe, stimulating and healthy environment in which children felt respected, valued and included. We observed this in practice - during the inspection we saw that children experienced a warm, safe and nurturing environment where staff promoted and respected children's rights.

Families were actively encouraged to participate in the life of the service through ongoing feedback strategies. This included gathering their views and opinions on a range of important matters. For example, their involvement in the review of the service's vision values and aims. This meant that families were meaningfully involved and contributed to the quality of the service.

The management team and staff were committed to providing a high-quality service for children and families. Quality assurance systems were well established and included an improvement plan and self-evaluation processes to monitor and review the quality of the service. This was evident during our conversations. Staff spoke about how they wanted to continuously improve the service and how their contribution, for example, taking on leadership roles helped improve the service. This resulted in positive outcomes for children.

We made some suggestions to the management team to further develop the provision of some resources for children. This was well received and acted upon quickly. This assured us that the service's capacity for improvement was very good.

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.

4.3 Staff deployment

All staff had a kind, caring and nurturing approach. Their skilled interactions and understanding of children's individual needs was evident during the inspection. They were committed to supporting families and had embedded a calm, warm and nurturing environment that welcomed children and ensured their wellbeing needs were met. This meant that children felt valued, safe and secure in the care of a committed team.

There was a strong ethos and culture of teamwork and a shared commitment to the overall quality of the service. The team worked well together and were flexible to ensure smooth transition times throughout the day, including lunchtime. They communicated well and supported each other to work as a team. As a result, children's routines were not interrupted.

Staff were deployed according to their skills, knowledge and experience. They were consulted about their preferences to work with different age groups and this was matched to their skill set. A senior staff member was deployed in all playrooms to oversee the routine which ensured continuity of care and support for children. They lead by example and role modelled, for example, praising staff and directing them when necessary. This meant that staff were well deployed and children's needs were supported and met.

Professional review and development opportunities were scheduled throughout the year for staff to reflect on their practice and for the manager to provide feedback. Training needs were identified and agreed ensuring staff were well trained and knowledgeable about child development. One staff member commented, "Training courses promote new ideas and build my confidence which has a positive impact on children's experiences. My Action Plan last year was Numeracy".

Staff were familiar with child protection protocols and were confident about reporting any concerns. As a result, children were safe from harm.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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