

Psychology Kindergarten Day Care of Children

University of Stirling
Bridge of Allan
Stirling
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 May 2024

Service provided by:
Psychology Kindergarten

Service provider number:
SP2003001112

Service no:
CS2003005371

About the service

Psychology Kindergarten is a day care of children service, registered to provide care for a maximum of 16 children at any one time.

Children are cared for from the Psychology department within Stirling University. Children have two interconnecting playrooms and two toilet facilities within the nursery. There is an office space, family waiting room and research room. The main playroom has a one-way mirror where families can view children as they settle into nursery. Children have access to other facilities within Stirling University and their extensive peaceful grounds.

Psychology students attending Stirling University conduct real-life studies on child development. They visit the nursery and undertake observational studies, either behind the one-way mirror or within the playroom. When families register children, they have the option of children participating in the research activities.

The service is in partnership with Stirling Council to provide funded Early Learning and Childcare for children aged three and over.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 and 30 May 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 reviewed our returned questionnaire's from their family members.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children and families were welcomed into the nursery which was having a positive impact on relationships and effective information sharing.

Calm, warm, and positive interactions by staff contributed to children feeling happy and safe and provided them with a sense of belonging.

Robust improvement planning, effective self-evaluation and reflection on practice enabled leaders and staff, to clearly identify what was working well and what could be improved.

Staff had developed meaningful relationships with children and families which supported children to flourish and thrive.

Children benefitted from a very good range of spontaneous and planned learning experiences. Planning approaches were mostly responsive and in the moment which meaningfully engaged children in their play and learning experiences.

Staff morale was high, they worked very well together, and had formed respectful working relationships. As a result, a positive team ethos contributed to very good outcomes for children.

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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

1.1. Nurturing care and support

Children's overall wellbeing was supported very well by staff, that provided children with nurturing and responsive care. Staff were calm, fun, and friendly, they affectionately told us of children's personalities, interests, preferences, and dislikes. It was evident they valued the children as individuals, knew them well and had high aspirations for them. This resulted in children who were happy, settled, and confident in their routines and experiences.

Effective information sharing with families supported robust personal planning. Staff gathered key information from families, the children and took account of the wellbeing indicators. This resulted in personal plans contributing positively to children reaching their full potential. Children's personal plans were informative and contained a lot of information, which created a holistic picture of each child. We highlighted to the manager, creating an overview sheet or something similar for supply staff, prior to them working with children would help them further in meeting children's needs in a consistent way. Children requiring additional support had Individualised strategies in place, which most staff skilfully and successfully reflected in practice. This resulted in all children being fully included in nursery experiences. A parent told us, 'Friendly, kind, caring, well trained staff, feel so confident with their judgements and skills, can't ask for better'.

Mealtimes were positive experiences for children. A rolling snack time meant children could eat at a time that was right for them and at a relaxed pace. They helped staff prepare snack choices, filled jugs, and happily chatted to staff as they proudly took on jobs of responsibility and independence. At lunchtime staff sat with children, promoted manners, and encouraged them to try foods. There were some opportunities to be responsible and independent, however, we highlighted to staff how these could be enhanced further. Overall, children were experiencing unhurried and sociable mealtimes within a relaxed and calm atmosphere. This meant children were happy and learning important life skills. Allergies were managed well which kept children safe.

Children's health and wellbeing needs were being met as the appropriate forms and permissions were in place for the safe administration of medication. Staff were knowledgeable on how to share initial concerns on children's welfare and were confident in child protection procedures. This contributed to keeping children safe from harm.

1.3 Play and learning

Children benefitted from a very good range of spontaneous and planned learning experiences. Planning approaches were mostly responsive and in the moment which reflected children's interests. Staff were knowledgeable about each child's stage of development and confidently used this information, to support high quality play and learning experiences. Observations and next steps in learning were age and stage appropriate, focused on learning and monitored well. This resulted in children being supported to reach their full potential.

Children's opinions and views were valued as floor books, were of high quality and clearly evidenced staff listened to children. Play experiences were interesting and fun as children were fully involved in leading their play and learning. This contributed to children being meaningfully engaged in their play which supported them to develop and flourish. There were some missed opportunities to deepen children's interests. We highlighted to staff how floor books could be further developed to enhance children's interests and evidence the progression and depth of learning children had or could experience.

Staff calmly and kindly responded to children's requests. Staff successfully used effective questioning and skilfully scaffolded learning. Staff This enhanced children's thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as enriching their play and promoted their curiosities and sense of wonder.

Children's learning was enhanced as they developed strong connections to their own and wider communities. Children regularly visited facilities in and around the university campus. For example, the art gallery to view students' art creations, and the atrium to watch a Chinese New Year dance display. The children told us they liked to go to the wellbeing and sensory room. At the time of the inspection, in response to children's requests, the staff were supporting the children to choose resources to create their own wellbeing and sensory room.

Children were very well connected to their cultural environments as they participated in experiences that explored diverse cultures, which was a real strength of the setting. For example, talking tiles on the playroom wall provided children with key words, such as hello, goodbye and thankyou in all the different languages children experienced at home. The children had helped plan a cultural week where families were being invited in to share recipes and talk about countries where extended families lived. These approaches contributed to children's sense of belonging and told us they were valued and respected.

Language, literacy, and numeracy opportunities were supported well indoors. Children benefitted from a vocabulary rich environment, which included a range of reference books linked to children's interests on Bees, Butterfly's and life cycles. We saw children regularly and confidently practiced their early writing skills with various materials provided. Fine motor skills, sorting and matching opportunities were provided in most areas of play through a very good provision of smaller loose parts. There was scope to further promote children's language and literacy skills in the outdoor Courtyard area.

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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

2.2. Children experience high quality facilities

Children were made to feel like they belonged because staff had created a warm, inviting, and calm environment. Their artwork and photographs of their successes and achievements were attractively displayed in the corridor leading to the nursery. Framed photographs of the children at nursery and floor books of their ideas were respectfully displayed in a family room, opposite the nursery. We saw staff enthusiastically welcomed children and families into the service at the start of the day. They communicated well with families, and effective information sharing enabled staff to sensitively support transitions from home to nursery. As a result, children were happy to come into the service and settled quickly into their routines.

Children had access to a connected playroom and quiet room. Both spaces had been thoughtfully resourced to take account of individual interests and needs. The playroom provided a very good provision of natural materials, loose parts and real-life experiences which provided children with a wealth of opportunities to be curious and creative. A child engaged in a transient art activity, proudly showed us their creation. They told us, 'Wow, look what I've made I want to take a picture for my mum'. Resources were easily accessible, and well organised, which empowered children to self-select and make their own choices. This resulted in children having a sense of ownership and demonstrated that they mattered. Some children would benefit from being provided with more challenge in some areas of play.

Children were offered opportunities to rest and relax as homely and comfortable spaces enabled them to have some time alone or quietly play with their peers in the quiet room. Children made good use of the spaces available and moved confidently between the playroom and quiet room. We saw they played happily together in small groups, which supported them to build positive relationships and develop their social skills.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported well, as they had regular access to the outdoors for fresh air and exercise. Despite, this not being free flow due to where the nursery was situated within the university campus, it was very well managed. For example, they had opportunities to visit, lochs, the dark wood, the castle, log pile, courtyard or the fairy waterfall. Children consulted 'The Remembering Map' and worked cooperatively together to decide on where they would play.

Staff were knowledgeable on our SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) keeping children safe campaign and how this supported them to ensure children were always accounted for. They empowered children to take responsibility to assess and remove risks in their indoor and outdoor environments prior to play, or when moving around the university campus. These approaches taught children how to manage positive risk while keeping themselves and others safe. We asked the children about SIMOA they told us, 'Keeps us safe,' and 'We have to count our friends all the time'.

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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Leaders were visible and their strong leadership formed an ethos across the team, which clearly demonstrated the nursery's vision and values. There was an ethos of mutual respect between the provider, leaders and staff team who were kind, caring and clearly respected children. These values contributed to children feeling safe and secure and empowered them to have a sense of belonging. This contributed positively to the morale of the staff team who had high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. Families had confidence in the staff and the service provided. Their comments included, 'It is the best overall service experience we've had, and we highly recommend the expertise of staff and support is excellent,' 'Staff consistent and it makes such a difference,' and 'The staff are fantastic'.

Children and families benefitted from leader's who had a strong sense of commitment to improvement planning.

There was a realistic improvement plan in place which was developed and supported through robust self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures. Leaders and staff collated and considered the views of staff, children and families when planning for improvement. This resulted in an environment of continuous improvement, which was inclusive, child centred and secured positive experiences for children.

Leaders and staff were passionate and enthusiastic about their roles and responsibilities. They participated in regular meetings with the provider which enabled professional discussions and allowed them to reflect on their practice and the service they provided. This meant staff understood their roles in reviewing and evaluating developments within service provision. They demonstrated confidence in making the changes that were needed to improve experiences and provide very good outcomes for children and families.

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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.3. Staff deployment

Children were cared for by a staff team who were compassionate, friendly, and responsive to children's needs. There was a good mix of skills and knowledge within the staff team who were committed to providing quality play and learning for children. They had worked hard to establish positive relationships, with each other, the children, and families. They communicated in a respectful way and spoke with enthusiasm and passion about their roles, which demonstrated positivity and commitment to their work. This supported children to have fun, achieve and feel safe in the service. One parent told us, 'Staff are excellent, consistent, very well trained and supportive'.

Staff had a good mix of skills, knowledge, and experience to meet children's needs. They could confidently discuss training they had attended how they used learning to improve experiences for children. As a result, they developed professionally, and children were provided with very good outcomes.

Effective staff deployment meant there were enough staff to care for children and meet their needs. There was sufficient staff to enable children to visit areas of the university campus and staff breaks were well managed. This meant children were kept safe, and their routines were not disrupted when staff were given time to eat and rest.

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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