

# Great Western Pre-School @ Kingswells Day Care of Children

Kingswells Village Centre  
Kingswood Mews  
Kingswells  
Aberdeen  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
3 July 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Lorndale Aberdeen Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2013012192

**Service no:**  
CS2013321322

## About the service

Great Western Pre-School @ Kingswells is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 100 children at any one time, aged from 0-12 years. The nursery is located in the village of Kingswells, Aberdeen.

Children are cared for in four playrooms downstairs and two playrooms upstairs with access to an outdoor play area. The service is within walking distance of shops, parks and other local amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 01 July 2024 between 09:40 and 17:45, 02 July 2024 between 08:30 and 17:00 and 03 July 2024 between 09:10 and 13:15. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations we:

- spent time with children using the service and spoke with five of their parents/carers
- received 24 responses to our request for feedback from parents via MS Forms
- received 19 responses to our request for feedback from staff via MS Forms
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced care from kind, nurturing and caring staff.
- Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning.
- There were a wide range of high-quality resources, offering children opportunities for challenge, creativity and problem solving.
- Children have regular outdoor experiences to promote their health and wellbeing.
- Management and staff should continue the process of quality assurance including self-evaluation to support further improvements to the experiences for children.
- Staff were committed to their role to support the wellbeing of children and families in 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?	5 - Very 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

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

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

Children were supported by nurturing and caring staff. Staff were responsive to children's needs providing reassurance and comfort when needed. This helped children to feel safe, secure and loved. Children and their families were welcomed into the service. This supported sharing of information and positive relationships. Most families told us they felt connected to the staff caring for their children. One parent commented, "The staff are so welcoming and very caring towards the children." Another parent shared, "They all know my child very well and make an effort to know me too."

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Plans included individualised information on children's needs and how these would be met. These were discussed with parents and updated regularly to ensure consistency between the service and home. Support plans with clear strategies were put into practice by staff. This included joint working with other agencies such as speech and language, where appropriate. This meant children with additional support needs were well supported to achieve their potential.

Children received varied experiences during mealtimes. Older children had some opportunities to self-serve food and clear away dishes. During the inspection children practised carrying their lunch on trays in preparation for their transition to primary one. Children's independence and life skills could be developed by further opportunities, such as helping set the table, preparing snacks and giving children choice where to sit. At times, staff did not sit with children as they were focused on other tasks. This is detailed further under quality indicator 4.3, staff deployment. This had the potential to impact on children's safety and did not support a good social mealtime experience. We discussed this with the manager and we observed some improvement on the second day of inspection. Some food given to the children was not prepared in line with guidance on choking and may have the potential to cause a choking hazard. We brought this to the attention of the manager who provided staff with 'Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children'. Despite this we continued to observe and identify some concerns relating to the size of some food items given to children. After further discussion the manager took action to ensure the size of food given to children was suitable (**see area for improvement 1**).

Appropriate storage and systems were in place for medication being administered safely to meet children's health needs. Clear protocols ensured staff were knowledgeable about children's health needs and to know the signs, symptoms and actions to take where a child may require medication.

Children's safety and wellbeing was promoted as staff showed a good understanding in their role of identifying, recording and referring any safeguarding concerns. Chronologies were in place to monitor and help ensure children and their families were provided with the support and care they needed.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun and were engaged in a variety of appropriate experiences, relevant to their interests. This included constructing models in the woodworking area, dressing up, and exploring the sand and water trays. Parents commented positively on the range of play stating, "My children have been involved in a variety of

fun and enriching activities" and "Staff provide them with so many opportunities."

Staff interactions were supportive and helped to promote a fun and relaxed atmosphere. For example, staff dressed up and joined in children's dramatic play. They supported children's interest to write, and were responsive to children's ideas when constructing a model. Effective use of questioning by staff helped extend children's engagement, widen their skills and consolidate learning.

Planning approaches were child centred with children actively leading their own learning. Floorbooks effectively captured their thoughts, ideas and discussions. A mixture of focus week and ongoing observations were used to identify and develop next steps to support children's learning and progression. This meant children were well supported to achieve and progress.

Opportunities for literacy and numeracy were embedded across all experiences. These included real life resources such as clocks, recipe books, diaries, scales, old phones and measuring tapes. Mathematical language was used as children were encouraged to follow a recipe to make playdough and count as part of the daily routines. Opportunities for early mark making and early reading skills were promoted through the recognition of environmental print and books in all areas. Children enjoyed reading stories and singing songs with staff in the comfortable and attractive play spaces.

Meaningful links within the local community had been established and included visits to local shops, parks and daily trips to local wooded areas. During the inspection a group of children visited the local woods and enjoyed looking for insects, creating homes for fairies and physical play. This meant children developed a strong connection with the world around them. A child commented, "I like going to Forest School!"

### Areas for improvement

1. To promote children's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure that staff are knowledgeable about good practice related to the prevention of choking. The provider should ensure that staff implement safe practices related to the preparation and serving of food.

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

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1:19).

### 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.

Children benefitted from playrooms that were attractive, well-furnished and comfortable, with natural décor which helped create a calm atmosphere to support children's play and learning. Children were confident moving around the spaces, both indoors and within the enclosed outdoor areas. Parents told us, "The indoor and outdoor spaces are great" and "There are lots of natural resources to help enhance imagination."

Exciting and stimulating play spaces offered choice, challenge and opportunities to develop creativity and problem-solving. For example the art areas contained extensive resources that inspired children's creativity and promoted pre-writing skills. As a result, children demonstrated sustained engagement in their choice of play.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by daily access to the outdoors. Natural, open ended resources such as reels, crates, tyres and a wooden climbing frame, supported children to explore, jump, climb and balance. Opportunities to develop imagination, curiosity and creativity were observed as children played in the mud kitchen and whilst digging in the soil and bark areas. A child commented, "I like playing outside on the tree trunks and building a tower."

Parents told us their children had the opportunity to play outdoors and some parents felt this was a key strength in the setting. One parent said, "The nursery offers daily play time outside and weekly visits to the woods. The garden is a great space with something for everyone."

Rooms and cosy spaces supported children's wellbeing. Comfortable couches, dens, rugs and cushions created homely areas where children could relax and sleep during a busy day. Staff showed us a sensory area they were developing to provide an additional space for children to explore, rest and regulate their emotions.

Displays around the environment showcased children's work and achievements. As a result children felt valued as they were able to share their learning with family and friends. This gave a strong message that children mattered.

Children's safety was supported by a well maintained building and secure entry system. Staff were deployed at the gate to supervise families and visitors entering and leaving the building. Children were encouraged to participate when assessing and discussion in keeping safe. This included when using tools at the woodworking and investigation areas and identifying boundaries when in the forest. This supported children's understanding of how to manage risk.

Children experienced an environment that was clean, which helped support their wellbeing. Staff and children washed hands at key times including before eating, which helped minimise the spread of infection. However, there were a few occasions where children did not wash their hands effectively. Staff should ensure appropriate systems are in place to supervise handwashing which would support children and help reduce the spread of infection.

Children's personal information was stored securely to ensure families privacy and confidentiality.

## 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.

The service vision, values and aims were shared with staff and families. This supported them to understand what to expect from the service.

Positive experiences for children were supported by realistic and achievable improvement plans. This detailed improvements such as online communication with families, children's support plans and the outdoor environment. The views of children and families were regularly sought and valued. Most families who completed our online survey strongly agreed or agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Parents were regularly asked for feedback in a variety of ways including surveys, newsletters, a suggestion box and nominating an employee of the month.

Parents and carers were welcomed into the service and activities such as Stay and Play sessions gave further opportunities for them to participate. Children's opinions were gathered through activities such as 'Nurture and Natter' where children were asked their thoughts and suggestions, and when taking part in floor book planning. This led to good relationships and a culture of working together to promote positive outcomes for children.

A quality assurance calendar was in place for monitoring and auditing some areas across the service. These supported positive outcomes for children relating to medication, personal plans, and the environment. We discussed with management where monitoring of some areas could be strengthened. For example, improved monitoring and quality assurance of mealtimes could have identified areas to improve practice to support a safe and sociable mealtime experience for children.

## 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.

Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff. A supportive induction process for new members of staff helped them grow in confidence and become competent in their role. The 'National Induction Resource' (Scottish Government 2023) was used to support this. A mix of staff skills and experience helped to ensure children's experiences across the day were mainly positive. Role modelling for less experienced staff was promoted.

Staff showed respect and consideration in their interactions with each other as well as with the children. This promoted a happy atmosphere for children to enjoy. Parents described staff as "really friendly", "approachable, kind and nurturing". Staff told us they felt well supported by each other and management. Staff were motivated to continually improving the service provided. One member of staff commented, "The approach to staff wellbeing makes me feel valued as a person not just as an employee". Another said, "I have a great team around me who are constantly checking in on each other".

Regular staff meetings provided opportunities to reflect and discuss practice. Management valued staff's contributions and leadership roles had been taken on within the team to enhance provision and children's experiences. This included developing the environment and the creation of staff training resources utilising best practice guidance. As a result staff were supported to influence change, with their expertise valued.

Staff were deployed at the entrance and exit points during busy times to help prevent children from leaving the service unsupervised. However, at key times such as some mealtimes staff were focused on tasks such as serving food, cleaning and clearing away. This meant that at times, not all children received effective support. Risk assessments for the outdoor area detailed staff deployment to support children taking risks and to keep them safe. However, staff were not always deployed effectively. For example, the risk assessment detailed the deployment of staff in relation to children using the climbing wall. We observed the climbing wall being used without the supervision detailed in the risk assessment. We brought this to the manager's attention. The manager advised they were aware of the situation and were in the process of attempting to deploy additional staff in the area. The manager should consider specific areas where staff deployment could be improved to meet the individual needs of children and support positive outcomes.

Children benefitted from a staff team who were committed to their own professional development. Staff had completed a range of training including first aid and child protection which helped keep children safe and well. They reflected on their practice and some were able to discuss the impact training had on outcomes

for children. This included providing woodworking experiences, using Floorbook planning approaches and supporting additional needs. Staff shared knowledge to ensure consistent practice within the team.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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	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?	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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