

FAREplay Nursery Day Care of Children

Fare
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 August 2024

Service provided by:
FARE Scotland Ltd

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2021000053

About the service

FAREplay Nursery is part of the well established voluntary organisation FARE Scotland, a voluntary organisation working with disadvantaged communities in central Scotland. FARE Scotland Ltd, has operated almost entirely from donations, grants and social enterprise funding.

FAREplay Nursery is registered to provide a care service for 66 children aged between two years to those not yet attending primary school. The service operates from FARE Scotland Ltd premises in the Easterhouse area of Glasgow. The service is close to other local nurseries, schools, parks and shops.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 and 15 August 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 attending the service
- spoke with the acting CEO, management team and staff
- received electronic feedback from eight parents/carers whose children attend the service
- observed practice and daily life for children attending the service
- reviewed documentation.

Key messages

- Children were happy and secure in their nursery environment.
- Staff knew children very well, personal plans were used effectively to ensure children received the right kind of care at the right time.
- Children experienced a positive mealtime experience.
- Children enjoyed learning outdoors and in their local community.
- The provider needs to ensure that maintenance issues are dealt with promptly.
- The provider needs to ensure a more balanced mix of staff skills, experience and qualifications.

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?	3 - Adequate

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 different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were engaged and happy to be at nursery. Parents and carers who provided feedback told us that they were happy with the care their children received at the setting. Some of their comments included:

"My son has the best time here. They do their absolute best for the kids. Always have them out and doing stuff in the community."

"The staff are so friendly. Answer any questions I have and always give me updates on my child."

"Have great relationship with all members of staff."

We carried out our inspection on the first day of the new term. As a result many children were returning to the service after the holidays, or starting the service for the first time. Staff were very reassuring and welcoming towards new children, returning children and their families. Overall children were very happy to be at nursery. Returning children were very welcoming to new children and were keen to help them navigate their way through the playroom and resources. The atmosphere was calm and relaxed. This helped to reassure children and made them feel secure.

Prior to children coming back or joining the service the manager issued families with their child's personal plans to review and update. We sampled some personal plans and found them an effective tool to plan, monitor and review children's individual needs, choices and wishes. Ensuring that personal plans were up to date meant that staff had the right information to care for and support children to reach their potential.

Mealtime experiences had improved for children in the service. After carrying out some research, and auditing the current arrangements, agreed changes were made between the manager and staff team. A lunch room had been introduced where children could enjoy their lunch in a relaxed and comfortable environment. In addition to this a rolling lunch had been introduced, this meant that children could choose when they went for lunch in much smaller groups than they had previously. We observed children sitting in a small group accompanied by staff at lunchtime. Children had opportunities to be independent and make their own choices. Staff sat close and were sensitive in their approach to supporting children when required.

All children received very good care and support from nurturing caring staff. Children who required additional support benefitted from a manager and keyworkers who recognised their needs. Very good links had been made with other professionals to seek advice and share information about children. Strategies to support care and learning were used to help children achieve and meet their potential. Very good links had been made with schools and other agencies to ensure children transitioned from nursery to a school which met their needs. Detailed accounts of children's needs and support systems ensured that schools knew how to meet the children's needs.

Staff were responsive to children's individual needs. As well as children being able to choose when they had snack and lunch, younger children could sleep when they needed to. We observed staff ensuring small sleep mats were available for children to sleep when they wanted to. Responsive approaches to children's care meant that children received the right kind of support at the right time.

Staff were aware of their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children. They had engaged in child protection training which provided them with the knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. This contributed to the health, safety and wellbeing of children using the service.

Quality indicator: 1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy, confident and engaged in their play. Children had opportunities to participate in a variety of play and learning experiences including large block play, sand play and roleplaying.

Children experienced a balance of planned and spontaneous activities and were able to lead their own play and learning. Children's voices were valued and staff based the experiences provided on children's interests.

Children had direct access to a secure and spacious outdoor area where they were able to lead their own learning. Children enjoyed physical play such as bikes, drawing and sand play by themselves or with friends. They also participated in adult led activities such as parachute play and mixing colours with spray bottles. Staff used skilful questioning to extend children's development of numeracy and literacy skills.

Staff planned for children according to interests and observed needs. Mind maps were used to record interests or needs and photos and children's comments were recorded in area folders. This gave children the opportunity to reflect on their play and learning and have ownership.

There were inconsistencies in the progression of next steps and tracking of children's learning. Online learning journals had few next steps identified and did not relate to children's next steps contained within area folders. Linking the journals to the area folder plans would offer a more robust understanding of children's progress and development. The manager should continue with her plans to support staff and monitor children's learning journals in order to be able to track and plan children's learning more effectively.

We received mixed responses from parents/carers about their children's learning and how their progress was shared. Some of their comments included :

"Personal journal is updated sometimes. Other than that no plans."

"I know what my child is working on, which is good."

"Never had any invites or parents evenings to show me any work or learning they do. It's like soft play they just play all day."

The manager should ensure that parents/carers are involved in and are made aware of their children's learning and how staff plan for progress. Opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in reviewing and contributing to their children's learning should be developed.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The service operates from the head quarters of FARE, a voluntary organisation working with disadvantaged communities throughout Scotland. The nursery have a secure ground floor dedicated space within the building. There are two playrooms available for children; one for children aged 2-3 and the other, larger room, for children aged 3-5. We noted that children had plenty of space to play and learn within their dedicated playrooms. Both rooms had access to a secure outdoor play space.

Improvements had been made to how the staff used and planned the learning environment, particularly in the 3-5 room. Designated areas meant that children could play with resources and materials which supported their play and learning and of which they were interested in. Staff were deployed in each area for a period of time, and were responsible for observing and monitoring how the play space and resources were working to give children the best opportunities.

Children had opportunities to play and learn outdoors in their garden area and within their local community. We found the garden area to be secure and well resourced with a mixture of natural and manufactured resources. Children enjoyed the time they spent in the garden playing and learning whilst benefitting from fresh air.

FAREplay nursery and the wider FARE organisation were an integral part of the local community. Nursery children were frequent visitors to the community allotment where they had opportunities to explore nature, by planting and growing and being part of their community. Being part of a wider community gave children a sense of belonging.

We noted that overall the environment was safe and secure. We highlighted some maintenance issues such as broken handles, out of order children's toilets and out of order staff toilet sink which could have presented potential risks to children. We noted that although procedures were in place to report maintenance issues it took too long for these to be actioned. Some parents/carers and staff who provided electronic feedback also raised concerns about maintenance issues not being addressed. We discussed this with the acting CEO of the organisation and the nursery manager who provided assurance that the current issues would be addressed immediately and more robust maintenance would be carried out.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service was led by a motivated and experienced nursery manager who was supported by a deputy manager, senior staff and the wider organisation. Staff we spoke to told us that they found the management team approachable and supportive.

The leadership within the service promoted a culture of continuous improvement. Management and staff were clear about improvement priorities, and staff were supported to engage in the settings improvement journey. We could see progress being made, for example where robust auditing and monitoring of the learning environment and mealtimes had taken place children were benefitting from improved outcomes.

The management team recognised that self-evaluation was the responsibility of all. Self-evaluation was used to identify strengths and where improvements could be made. They were committed to the continuous improvement of the service, they recognised and valued the contributions of staff, and children. This could be further developed by introducing ways of involving parents and carers more in the development and improvement of the service. The service should include parents and carers in their self-evaluation and improvements. Responding to parents and carers ideas and opinions would help them to feel involved and understand the difference their opinions have made to the service. Parents/carers who provided feedback about how they and their child were involved in the service told us:

"I know that my child is asked his views and opinions to what he can do for his age and stage and as a parent I am asked about the above to and news letters are given out to which always state any questions or suggestions can be made either verbally or by emailing the nursery." and "I am always happy to engage with the service and would welcome the opportunity to provide support to help develop the service for the future."

We could see where some monitoring of staff practice and development needs had taken place. We found however that a more robust monitoring and supervision programme was in place for unqualified staff than for qualified and senior staff. We discussed with the manager how a more formal approach to support and supervision and monitoring of staff practice formally would help to develop staff's skills and knowledge.

Core monitoring of aspects such as medication and accidents was carried out routinely. We could see how the manager planned auditing in these areas to ensure that medication held in the service was still required and was within expiry dates. Auditing of accidents helped to identify where risk assessments may have needed to be reviewed and where changes had to be made to make environments safe for children.

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were friendly, welcoming and willing to engage with the inspection process. The service had undergone a number of staff changes recently, however, staff told us that they were gelling as a team and worked well together. Regular opportunities for room and staff meetings gave staff the opportunity to get to know each other, share ideas and discuss individual children and the service as a whole. Parents and carers who provided feedback commented positively about the staff and their relationships with them and their children. Some of their comments included:

"If I have any issues the staff are always welcoming and listen to my problems if I have any and will resolve any issues I have."

"Have great relationship with all members of staff."

"My little girl loves all the staff and children and my youngest is starting after summer. Staff go above and beyond not only for my daughter but our whole family too."

While staffing levels met the minimum requirements we noted that more than 50 percent of staff employed in the service to support and plan for children were unqualified and going through training through FARE modern apprentice programme. Whilst we observed all staff to be motivated and enthusiastic about their work the high level of unqualified staff meant that there was a range of skills and experience within the team. The provider should consider the amount of modern apprentices employed in the setting at any one time. They need to consider the differing knowledge, skills and experience of staff when making deployment decisions. (See area for improvement)

We carried out safer recruitment audit on the newly recruited staff. Recruitment procedures and checks were carried out by the HR department of FARE. The recruitment team should adhere to the full requirements of staff recruitment as documented within its own policy and procedures for all staff. Although the service had completed PVG checks (protection of vulnerable groups) for modern apprentices, they had not obtained two references. We discussed this with the manager and the acting CEO who agreed to ensure this was taken forward with the recruitment team. This would further support that the children were cared for by suitable staff. Feedback we received from parents/carers about the deployment and skills of staff was variable. Some of their comments included:

"The girls are all lovely but all really young not a lot of experience in the nursery." and "They need to invest in staff with experience to many apprentices feel like this is because they are cheaper."

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should at a minimum :

- a) Ensure that there are, at all times, staff present in suitable numbers and with the skill to meet the care, welfare, support and safety needs of children.
- b) Address the balance of qualified and unqualified workers.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

On receipt of this report, the provider should ensure that staff follow and implement strategies set out within personal plans consistently.

This requirement was made on 1 February 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Personal plans reflected observations of children and their needs. Clear strategies were recorded and updated to support children. We saw very good evidence to show that personal plans were reviewed and updated regularly.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 11 August 2023, the provider must ensure that children experience meals served in a relaxed, calm, pleasurable and safe environment. The environment, location and setting should be well planned and promote a sense of belonging and support social interactions.

This requirement was made on 1 February 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Overall huge improvements to lunchtime experience. Children experienced a lunchtime experience which was calm and relaxed. Staff were very supportive and attentive to children. Children's independence was being encouraged.

Met - within timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

The manager should continue to develop and implement robust and transparent quality assurance systems. This will contribute towards all children experiencing high-quality care and learning within a safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 1 February 2024.

Action taken since then

The manager had involved staff in self evaluation tasks and quality assurance tasks. Although we have considered this area of improvement to have been met we made suggestions of how this could be further developed and improved.

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	5 - Very 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?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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