

Crudie Playgroup Day Care of Children

The Old School House
Crudie
Turriff
AB53 5QD

Telephone: 01888 551 326

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 August 2024

Service provided by:
Crudie Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003000423

Service no:
CS2003002546

About the service

Crudie Playgroup is a day care of children service registered to provide care to a maximum of 10 children between two years and primary school entry. During our inspection visits there were between six and nine children attending the service.

The service is provided from a school house situated in the village of Crudie within the grounds of the primary school. Children have access to the ground floor and a large, secure, outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 and 28 August 2024 between the times of 09:00 and 16:15. 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 and complaint 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 two of their parents/carers
- received nine completed questionnaires
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children's wellbeing was supported through caring and nurturing interactions with staff who knew them well.
- An effective way to share children's current learning and achievements should be developed to promote children's confidence and involve parents in their learning.
- Children benefitted from a relaxed and homely environment, with plenty of natural light and ventilation to support their health and wellbeing.
- Leaders and staff were committed to improving the service and a system for self-evaluation was in place.
- Children received care from a staff team which was responsive and flexible to meet their 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?	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's wellbeing was supported through caring and nurturing interactions with staff who knew them well. Staff spoke confidently about children's characters, interests and development. Parents told us that they were happy with the care their children received.

Interactions when providing personal care such as toileting or nappy changing supported children's privacy and dignity. Children were discreetly reminded to visit the toilet or asked if they wanted to have their nappy changed. Children's confidence was promoted as staff allowed time for them to be independent while providing support.

Children enjoyed relaxed and sociable meal and snack times. There were opportunities at these times for children to practice self-help skills. This involved serving their own food and drink and helping staff set the table. Previous experiences such as helping to bake or make soup had further supported these skills. However, the opportunities presented by daily routines should be developed. For example, routinely helping to prepare fruit for snack. Children and staff all ate lunch together promoting a relaxed and family atmosphere. Interactions with children at this time promoted their skills in communication and the building of relationships. Towards the end of mealtimes staff started to clear away which meant their focus was no longer with the children. Staff should ensure that someone remains focused on children throughout mealtimes to fully promote their safety and positive experiences.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted as information to support staff in meeting their needs was recorded within personal plans for each child. This included information on children's interests, any medical needs and home routine. These were sent home with parents for review every term. For the plans we sampled reviews had taken place but the paperwork recording these could not be found. It is important that reviews are recorded accurately to ensure staff are accessing the most recent and relevant information for children. The manager agreed to develop how reviews are recorded going forward.

While no children currently required medication, processes and paperwork were in place which promoted children's health and wellbeing should it be necessary. A policy supported staff practice and understanding and promoted parent's awareness of the process.

Children's safety and wellbeing was supported by staff understanding of their role in identifying, recording and reporting any child protection concerns. Staff practice was supported by appropriate training and policies. Currently the manager was responsible for managing any concerns with the chairperson covering this role should the manager be absent. The chairperson had not attended any child protection training although they were aware of the policy and would refer to this for guidance. This role should be carried out by a person with appropriate training to support their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children. This will promote consistent quality of care from an appropriately trained person should there be concerns for children's safety.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were having fun and engaged in their activities during our inspection visits. They were offered a variety of planned and spontaneous activities. These offered children play and learning opportunities which included imagining, being creative and problem solving. Experiences included building models, gardening, bug hunts, physical play and storytelling.

Staff were responsive to the children's interests, for example starting a bug hunt rather than the planned planting of flowers when children's interests changed. As a result, children had fun and were leading their own play. Staff were confident in discussing children's interests and how activities supported these. They were less confident in discussing how this supported children's individual learning and development.

Language and communication skills were promoted through interactions woven throughout the day. For example, spontaneous storytelling to individual and small groups of children and natural discussions. There were some opportunities for children to develop skills in numeracy through the playing of games and counting activities. There were some missed opportunities for staff to extend these experiences for children. For example, measuring or comparing the size of block models or using positional language within activities. The manager agreed to review staff practice and support development of these skills.

Observations of children's learning were taking place. These were recorded in children's plans and parents could access these when they wanted to. The plans were formally shared with parents each term. A display was also used to support information sharing and help children to recognise their learning. This display had not been kept up to date. The manager and staff should work to develop an effective system of sharing children's learning to support children's confidence and parents' awareness. Observations were not yet consistently informing the planning of learning activities or identifying next steps and strategies of support to be used to promote children's progress. This had been recognised by the manager and was included in the service improvement plan. **See area for improvement 1.**

Areas for improvement

1. In order to support positive learning experiences for children and promote their progression the manager and staff should consistently record children's achievements. They should then use this information to identify appropriate next steps for children and plan how these can be achieved. This will enable strategies of support to be evaluated and children's progress to be tracked and promoted.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

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

Children enjoyed a comfortable and homely environment. There was plenty of natural light and ventilation to support their health and wellbeing. Soft furnishings such as rugs, cushions and an armchair promoted children's comfort and provided places to relax and rest.

Children's choice was supported as they were able to access most resources independently. Resources promoted children's safety as they were developmentally appropriate for the age of the children. They included small world figures and vehicles, creative and sensory resources such as paint and dough. The resources broadly reflected children's interests, supporting their engagement. In some areas this should be further developed. For example, in the role play area the addition of plates and utensils would have enabled children to extend their play. Some of the older or more able children would have benefitted from more challenge in the resources. For example, more complicated construction resources, games or puzzles would have supported children's problem-solving skills and promoted further engagement.

Children's safety was supported by good maintenance processes in place. As part of the school campus the building was maintained through janitorial services. Risk assessments were in place to further support children's safety. These were detailed and regularly reviewed supporting staff to understand steps to be taken to reduce any risks to children.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place and followed to support children's health. This included encouraging children to wash hands at appropriate times and staff role modelled and supported this well. Although clean and well-presented some areas of the environment appeared cluttered. If unchecked this could begin to inhibit effective cleaning and impact on children's play by encroaching on available space. The manager agreed to review this and remove any unnecessary items from work surfaces and consider the best storage of some items and resources. This will make the space easier to clean and more relaxing for children.

The privacy of children and their families was protected by the safe storage of information. This included the storage of paper records in cupboards and password protection for digital information.

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

A statement of the vision, values and aims of the service had recently been reviewed with parents and staff. These were displayed to share the information with parents and visitors to the service. This supported people to be aware of what was important for the service to meet the needs of children and their families.

Parental involvement was a strength for the group which was provided by a volunteer committee of parents and carers. Other opportunities for involvement included fundraising and development of specific things such as the outdoor area. Parents who responded to our request for feedback all felt involved in the development of the service. One parent commented, 'We are always asked our views on big changes needed and we were recently asked our thought on the vision of the playgroup'.

Parents views were sought on the service and suggestions for changes were taken forward. This included ideas for developing the outdoor and indoor environments. Children's views were sought by encouraging them to identify what they would like their environment to look like and what resources they would prefer. This was mostly done through discussions and pictures which involved the older children. The manager and staff should continue to develop how they capture children's views. This should support them to ensure that all children are able to contribute fully to the quality assurance and improvement processes.

Staff were reflective of their practice and of the care and learning that they provided to children. Guidance documents were used to evaluate their work and identify areas for improvement. A local authority self-evaluation tool was used to identify areas of strength and weakness across the whole service. This had been used to inform action plans to promote improvement. Included in the current plans were the outdoor environment and planning and observation for children's learning.

Some actions which had been carried out had not yet been evaluated. We discussed the importance of evaluating changes based on their impact on experiences and outcomes for children. Some of the planned changes had not been achieved within the desired timeframe. The manager should use the evaluation process to identify barriers to change and include strategies for overcoming these going forward. This will support the staff and manager in making changes that are relevant and impactful for the children currently attending the service.

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

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by there being enough staff present to meet their needs. Leaders recognised the importance of a stable staff team to promote relationships and children's wellbeing. There was a mix of skills and experience within the small staff team. This meant that staff were able to work within their strengths and interests promoting positive experiences for children.

Children and their families were welcomed into the sessions with time for staff to talk to parents and children. This supported effective information sharing and helped children and families feel welcomed and valued. Parents told us they felt that relationships had been built with staff with comments such as, "They are lovely. You know when your child is comfortable with the ladies when they run up and cuddle the leaders when they see them out of playgroup" and "All the staff are brilliant and very caring, make a big effort to welcome my children and take care of all their needs".

Staff deployment mostly supported children's wellbeing throughout the session including at busy times such as handovers. Staff breaks and absences were managed well to limit any negative impact these may have on children's experiences. At most times staff were proactive in noticing where there may be gaps in children's support or experience and filling these. They communicated well with each other to ensure children continued to receive support should tasks take them away from a child. Staff treated each other with friendship and courtesy contributing to a relaxed and happy atmosphere which children enjoyed.

Generally, staff worked well together to meet children's needs and carry out tasks. However, there were times where this could be improved. For example, the end of mealtimes when staff were clearing away and in the upkeep of displays of children's achievements. We discussed these circumstances with the manager who agreed to look at staff deployment for certain tasks and responsibilities.

Children's safety was supported by recruitment processes which adhered to guidance. There were opportunities for staff to share experiences and skills before and after the sessions. The manager had plans to reinstate the individual staff meetings. These meetings would provide the opportunity to support continuous professional development which means children will be cared for by staff who are reflecting on practice and using the most recent guidance.

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

To ensure children receive high quality early learning and childcare, are kept safe and their well-being needs are met, the provider and manager should implement effective self-evaluation processes.

This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes." (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 19 November 2019.

Action taken since then

Self-evaluation systems are now in place. They are used to inform planned improvements to the service which have positive impact on children's outcomes and experiences.

This area for improvement has been met.

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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