

# Doodlebugs Day Nursery (Aberuthven) Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
18 September 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Doodlebugs Day Nurseries Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2013012143

**Service no:**  
CS2013319773

## About the service

Doodlebugs Day Nursery (Aberuthven) is a day care of children service registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 74 children up to the age of eight.

The service is provided from a purpose-built facility, over two floors, in the village of Aberuthven. Children aged three to five are cared for in a large playroom on the upper floor, with children aged under three cared for in two playrooms on the ground floor. Children cared for on the ground floor have direct access to an enclosed garden area accessible via the two playrooms on the ground floor.

The nursery is close to local amenities and is situated on a bus route.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 and 18 September 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed the children at play
- received questionnaire feedback from 19 families
- spoke with staff, management and provider
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professional.

**Key messages**

- Children were cared for by staff who were warm, caring and nurturing.
- Children were provided with appetising and nutritious snacks and homemade meals.
- Children experienced fun, stimulating and interesting play opportunities which promoted curiosity, imagination and collaborative play both indoors and outdoors.
- Quality assurance processes were now leading to improved outcomes for children and families.
- Children were supported to reach their potential by good quality observations.
- Children were cared for by the right number of staff throughout the day, ensuring that individual needs were being met.

**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?	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?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from warm, caring and nurturing approaches from staff. This resulted in children being happy and relaxed. Positive attachments were evident between children and staff. Families shared with us, "Doodlebugs is such a special place, it has a real family feel and all the staff are so friendly, caring and go above and beyond for my children" and "Throughout my child's time at Doodlebugs we have developed strong relationships with several members of staff. Staff show dedication, respect and care towards the children. They are invested in their wellbeing and development and this makes it very easy to feel that we as parents can communicate with them openly".

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by the use of personal planning documents. Information gathered was used effectively to help staff provide individualised care. Staff were knowledgeable about each child's needs and strategies in place to support them. There were some opportunities for families to complete plans together with staff. Staff spoke positively about how this was a good opportunity for developing relationships with families. On the whole, children's information was reviewed every six months with families. There was scope to further develop this to ensure it was consistent across the nursery. This will support staff to have the most current information to meet children needs. Children's support plans should also be regularly evaluated to help inform assessment or next steps to support children to progress.

Children's life skills were supported during mealtimes. They helped staff prepare snack for their peers and enjoyed this responsibility. Children benefitted from opportunities to be independent through self-serving and pouring their own drinks. Snack and meal choices were healthy and fresh water was available for children throughout the day. On the whole, children's safety was supported by staff knowledge of allergies and dietary requirements and processes in place to support this. Overall, mealtimes were a sociable experience where children sat with their peers. The service should ensure that staff are available to sit with children as some staff could be quite task orientated. This would promote children's safety during mealtimes.

Medication was stored safely and securely within the service. Medication consent forms and care plans were in place for children who required long term medication. These were reviewed with parents at least every three months in line with guidance.

Staff had accessed child protection training relevant to their role and responsibility to keep children safe. Chronologies were used effectively to record significant events in a child's life that may impact on their health and wellbeing. Outside agencies had been contacted and collaborated with when necessary. This meant children's individual needs were met as they benefitted from the right support at the right time

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun and the majority of children were meaningfully engaged in their play. A variety of open-ended, authentic resources supported children to lead their own learning. For example, weighing

scales near the home corner supported children developing numeracy and linked learning to real life experiences. Outdoors, children explored a variety of resources and experiences which supported their developing curiosity and problem-solving skills. Children explored loose parts in the garden as they made their own bus from old tyres and pieces of wood. Families shared with us, "My child has been involved in many activities from baking, making playdough, experimenting with food colouring and other things to make a volcano" and "There are different play themes each week which seems to come from the children's interests; castles, camping, dinosaurs etc. My child has grown more confident singing songs, is showing an interest in counting, reading and writing their name and I have noticed a particular acceleration in both their interest and skills in these areas after their nursery days".

Staff valued children's right to play and allowed them to choose where they wanted to play for most of the day. Children benefitted from accessing the outdoor space in all weathers. The stimulating outdoor space offered a wealth of opportunities to explore, have fun and engage in imaginative play. We saw a group of children who were very engaged in water play while other groups of children were engrossed at the mud kitchen and the mark making table. Families shared with us, "My children enjoy playing with the big loose parts. This week they liked pretending to be on a bus and role-played wheels on the bus. They also enjoy the sand area". At times, children's play was interrupted for large group times. Further consideration could be given to the flow of day to ensure that children continually benefit from uninterrupted play across the service.

Planning approaches were developing across the service with clear strengths and areas for development in each room. The service should build on these approaches by sharing the good practice in each room and continue to develop a consistent approach across the service. Floorbooks highlighted children's experiences and were beginning to represent their voice and thoughts. This allowed children to reflect on their learning. Staff spoke confidently about children's individual progress and clear procedures were in place to evaluate next steps and ensure children were progressing well. Observations of play and learning were current, of a good quality, and detailed children's individual learning and progress. Next steps were created with parents which enabled them to be involved in their child's learning. Staff shared with us, "Children's next steps and progress are made in partnership with parents. Parents are able to chat at drop off or pick up about any concerns they have about their children and we as a team work to identify ways we can support the child's needs alongside the parents". **(See area for improvement 1 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').**

A staff communication champion was developing the services approach to supporting children's developing communication skills. Staff and children had fun together playing, reading stories and singing songs. Effective questioning encouraged children to think independently and to reflect. This contributed to children feeling valued and having the ability to lead their own learning by following their interests.

Good use was made of the local community. Links had been made with the emergency services and the local care home. Visitors to the service included sports coaches. This supported children to develop a strong connection with their local community to ensure they felt valued.

## How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

## Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was warm and welcoming with plenty of natural light and ventilation. It was a clean, tidy and well-maintained space where children had ample room to play and have fun. Homely touches had been well considered, supporting children to feel comfortable and relaxed. Staff shared, "The environment is absolutely wonderful, inviting and offers rich learning opportunities for the children".

Children were cared for across three separate playrooms specific to their age. They benefitted from well-resourced indoor play areas where they could freely access interesting resources and objects to extend their play. Play opportunities supported children's curiosity, enquiry, and creativity and contributed to them developing a sense of ownership and respect for their environment. We saw children who explored happily and were engaged in their play.

Children in the 0-1 and 2-3 rooms benefitted from direct access to outdoors and children in the 3-5 rooms were regularly offered the choice to go outdoors. The 2-5 garden was well developed. We shared that parts of the baby garden could be further developed to ensure that all ages of children have access to a high quality environment outdoors.

Quiet areas had been created in each room which supported children's emotional wellbeing. There were cosy areas for children to relax and lights and fabrics had been used to soften spaces. A sleep room was available upstairs for babies. On the day of inspection, babies had limited access to the upstairs and slept on sleep mats in the playroom. This meant other babies had limited access to some play areas for a large portion of the day.

Children experienced consistently clean, well-maintained, and respectful play spaces. Overall, the nappy changing procedure reflected best practice around use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Nappy changing areas did not meet current guidance. For example, one area did not have appropriate ventilation. The minimum amount of nappy changing areas that should be accessible in relation to the number of children registered was not in place. The provider shared with us plans to be put in place to ensure the building meets current guidance. **(See area for improvement 2 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').**

### How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

## Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children benefitted from a reflective, committed leadership team. They engaged very well in the inspection process and were open to feedback to improve experiences for children. This demonstrated an ethos of commitment and willingness for continuous improvement.

The vision, values and aims of the service were clear and put children and families at the heart of the service. The team had plans to review the current vision, values and aims with families, children and staff. This would further ensure that these continue to reflect the aspirations of all.

Ongoing self-evaluation using best practice documents allowed the manager and staff to deliver high-quality care and support for children and families. An improvement plan identified relevant areas for development. The manager and staff undertook peer monitoring of each other's practice to support development and improvements. This supported professional dialogue and ongoing improvements.

A recent improvement priority of improving the services approach to supporting children's developing communication skills was having a positive impact on children. One staff member had recently taken over leading this development and worked closely with the local authority to further embed this approach. To develop the settings approach to improvement, the manager planned to attend training on improvement methodology through the local authority. We encouraged the manager to continue with their plans. This would further ensure improvements are outcome focused and lead to continuous improvement.

Families and children benefitted from a staff team that worked well together and were supported by the management team. Staff spoke confidently about the positive support they received and the impact this had on their own practice.

A welcoming ethos had been developed and maintained within the service. Families were welcomed into the service daily at drop off and collection times. They were not always able to go into the rooms. For example, a barrier in each playroom stopped parents from seeing all of the experiences on offer for their children. We asked the service to further consider this. This would promote true partnership work with families as equal partners in their child's learning.

Children and families' views were sought to inform the improvement of the service. For example, children were asked what they liked about staff members and families were asked what they would like to be improved in the service. This showed that children and families views were respected and supporting continuous improvement.

A shared leadership approach was leading to improvements in the setting. There were leadership opportunities for staff, for example, a communication champion. Staff spoke confidently about these roles and told us about the positive impact these had on outcomes for children.

Robust quality assurance systems were in place and ensured children continued to experience high quality care and support. Audits of practice during mealtimes, peer to peer observations were completed regularly and highlighted key areas of strengths and areas to further develop. This showed that quality assurance was improving experiences for children.

The setting had developed a robust approach to ensuring that children were safe and accounted for. They had worked with best practice guidance 'Look, Think, Act' also known as SIMOA, to ensure a consistent approach. The team discussed scenarios together which ensured all staff had a shared approach.

## 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.

### Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The provider appreciated the importance of appropriate staffing levels. Adult to children's ratios were maintained at all times and the manager was available to cover staff breaks. There had been some staff

changes since the last inspection, however, the staff team were now consistent and worked well together as a team. As a result, this did not impact on the quality of care and children's experiences. Parents shared with us, "When I drop off my child in the morning there is always someone to welcome my child into the playroom" and "The nursery have fantastic key workers. If they experience illness or shortage due to holidays or staff turnover, friendly bank staff faces will always be around. This helps settle my child. They always know a face in the room".

There was a very good range of staff skills and experience within the team to support children. All staff had undertaken core training and staff had made good use of other additional training to help improve their practice. Staff shared their learning with each other to improve outcomes for children.

Overall, the deployment of staff supported the supervision and care of children. Rotas were well organised, and staff communicated well with each other to ensure appropriate supervision promoted children's safety and engagement. Further consideration should be given to the lunchtime period to ensure that staff are not task orientated to support children to have a safe and sociable mealtime experience.

Staff were always available to chat with parents. Staff interacted positively, sharing information with families which demonstrated positive relationships had been formed. Some parents shared with us that they would like more information on their child's day, and we asked the manager to consider ways of ensuring all families feel well informed.

Safer recruitment had been followed for newly employed staff. Staff felt well supported when starting their role at the nursery. The provider planned to improve the induction process further to support a more in-depth induction with a focus on learning conversations and reflection.

## 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 support children to achieve, staff should improve recording of observations and next steps of children's learning.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Staff had completed training on observations, assessment and planning.

Monitoring of observation writing was now in place regularly.



An online tracker was being used to support children's development and progression.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

### Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider and manager should ensure that effective infection prevention and control practices are in place for children.

This should include but is not limited to:

- reviewing and making changes to nappy changing facilities.

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Children experienced consistently clean, well-maintained, and respectful play spaces. The pre-school room's layout had been rearranged to move the snack/lunch area away from the toilets. This ensured children were not eating near the toilet area.

Nappy changing areas did not meet current guidance. For example, one area did not have appropriate ventilation. The minimum amount of nappy changing areas that should be accessible in relation to the number of children registered was not in place. The provider shared with us, plans to be put in place to ensure the building meets current guidance.

**This area for improvement has not 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](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?	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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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