

Hoddom Nursery Day Care of Children

Hoddom Primary School
Langlands Road
Ecclefechan
DG11 3DS

Telephone: 01576 300 613

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 January 2025

Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003501

Service no:
CS2003015489

About the service

Hoddom Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time aged from two years to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than five are under three years. The service is based within the Hoddom primary school and children are accommodated in an open plan playroom with access to an enclosed outdoor garden. Hoddom nursery is located in a residential area in the town of Ecclefechan, Dumfries and Galloway.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 and 21 January 2025. 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 using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- consulted families through an online questionnaire
- observed practice and daily life for children attending the service
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were kind and applied nurturing approaches to support children to feel valued.
- Staff knew children well and had developed caring relationships with them to support their wellbeing and help them feel safe and secure.
- Children's personal plans had been reviewed and improved to ensure children's individual health, welfare and safety needs could be met.
- Quality assurance processes had been developed and should continue to be embedded to enhance outcomes for children and families.
- The manager and staff had a shared vision, with a focus on supporting children to reach their potential.
- Staff deployment should continue to be reviewed and improved to ensure staff are deployed based on their qualifications, skills and experience to enable children's needs and play preferences to be met consistently.

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 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 experienced warm, nurturing care that promoted their wellbeing. Most staff responded promptly when children required support and joined in with play experiences, helping children to have fun. Parents told us, "The staff are great, my child feels confident and happy around them." Staff's nurturing approaches enabled children to feel happy and secure.

Management and staff warmly welcomed children and families into the service at drop off and collection times. This supported positive relationships and enabled sharing of information to ensure children's daily care needs were met. All parents who responded to our questionnaire agreed that they had a strong connection with the staff caring for their child.

Essential information was gathered from families to inform children's personal plans. Management and staff used this information to ensure children's preferences were respected and plan how to meet their individual health, welfare and safety needs. Since the previous inspection, processes had been strengthened to ensure parents were included in creating and reviewing their child's plan. All parents that responded to our questionnaire agreed that they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan. This meant there was clear support strategies in place to ensure all children received the right support at the right time.

Management and staff told us they had been working hard to improve mealtime experiences. Morning snack was unhurried, relaxing and supported children's independence. However, this was not consistent at lunchtime. We discussed where improvements could be made to develop the lunch experience. For example, staff consistently sitting alongside children to support their language and communication skills. This would also ensure staff were well placed should a choking episode occur and to assist children's development in skills for life.

Effective Systems were in place to support safe storage and administration of medication. This meant children's health and medical needs were managed well.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy, having fun and enjoying their time at nursery. They told us they enjoyed, "playing mummies and daddies" and "playing with friends." Children were confident within their environment and moved freely around the playroom. They enjoyed playing with foam, mark making and creating moveable structures using recycled items. This meant that there were opportunities for children to choose where to play and develop skills whilst following their own interests.

Staff were cheerful and engaged well with children. Whilst staff interactions were warm and caring, there were some missed opportunities for staff to use skilled questioning to support and extend children's learning through meaningful conversations. The provider should continue to support staff, including supply staff to develop their skills, confidence and knowledge in supporting and extending children's play.

Management and staff told us that they were proud of how they had worked together to introduce new planning and tracking processes to support children to develop. Staff referred to this as 'triangulation'. Staff were making good progress with implementing these processes and now had systems in place to observe children, plan play and learning experiences and assess children's progress over time. Further expanding on the evaluation of learning would ensure children's interests consistently informed next steps for play and learning.

Literacy and numeracy opportunities were developing. There were some opportunities for children to explore and develop these skills. For example, some staff sang songs and told stories to children, books were available across curricular areas and some environmental print provided opportunities for children to explore familiar letters and words. During daily routines such as morning snack, staff supported numeracy by encouraging children to count. The team should continue with their plans to further develop resources to allow children to fully extend their skills.

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 were cared for in an environment that enabled them to feel welcome. Photographs and artwork were displayed around the setting and children had dedicated spaces to store their personal items. This promoted a sense of belonging.

Children experienced play spaces that were well ventilated. Staff spoke to us about some recent changes within setting. This included new furniture items such as, an easel, tables and natural play materials. The lay out of some spaces had been reviewed to support children to explore and play comfortably. To further enhance the indoor environment, low level lighting and soft furnishings could be added to create more cosy, calming spaces.

Indoor play areas had been well considered and took account of children's stages of development and provided a range of resources to support their play. Further consideration should now be given to ensuring more consistent provocations and invitations to learning are offered within play spaces. This is where materials with no predetermined outcome are provided to spark children's curiosity and encourage exploration. This stimulates children's thinking allowing them to solve problems and explore new ideas and concepts whilst having fun.

Children benefitted from the large outdoor space which provided a range of learning through physical and imaginative play. Children confidently explored outdoors transporting play items whilst being supported to manage and assess the risks involved in their play. This builds children's confidence and supports their overall wellbeing.

Safety measures were in place to minimise risk and help protect children from harm. These included; attendance registers which were regularly updated, frequent headcounts of children as they moved across play spaces and secure outdoor boundary fencing. Risk assessments were in place and the manager told us they were in the process of reviewing these. We identified some additional risks to children and asked that these are fully considered within the service's risk assessment processes. Potential hazards identified

included; Ivy growing in the garden which can be poisonous, tyres stacked at height located close to boundary fencing and a playroom door containing a low-level push bar which opened on to an unsecure community space. The management team shared our concerns and agreed to review these.

During our previous inspection in 2024, we identified that the children's toilets required upgrading. This had been previously identified by management and staff. In 2024, the head teacher informed us that this was recorded within the school maintenance plan. However, at the time of this inspection, no improvements had been made. To ensure personal care spaces are inviting and support positive experiences for children, further improvements are needed within children's toilets and nappy changing spaces.

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

The vision, values, and aims of the service were shared with the school. Children and families had been involved in developing a shared vision where everyone felt valued. A child friendly display supported younger children's involvement, and the shared aspirations were reflected in the caring and inclusive ethos of the service.

Through daily discussions, planned parent meetings and termly questionnaires, families views were sought to inform the development of the setting. All parents who responded to our questionnaire agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Comments made included, "The staff often ask for your input, and are always willing to listen to any suggestions." This told us that families felt listened to and that their opinions mattered.

The manager understood the strengths of the service, and recognised where further improvements were needed to ensure positive outcomes for children. Quality assurance processes were in place that were beginning to impact positively on outcomes for children and families. The service should continue to embed these processes as this will help them to continue to deliver high quality experiences for children and families.

The manager and staff were reflective within their practice and newly developed self-evaluation processes meant that staff were engaging with reflection and audit tasks to enable them to make meaningful changes. This supported their understanding of outcome focused practice for children.

There were opportunities for staff to make suggestions and voice their views during team meetings. All staff who responded to our questionnaire strongly agreed that they were fully involved in the self-evaluation of the service. When asked what improvements they would like within the service, staff comments related to improving children's experiences within their wider community and further developing the garden. The management team should ensure they consider these suggestions as part of the future improvement planning processes for the service.

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 kind and caring. They had developed positive relationships with children and their families which supported a happy and welcoming environment. Positive feedback we received from families highlighted a key strength of the service was relationships with staff. Comments included; "The staff in the nursery are great."

The team were aware of child protection procedures and how to keep children safe. All staff, including long term supply staff, had undertaken refresher safeguarding training. As a result, children were protected from harm.

Staff were supportive of each other, respectful and considerate of colleagues. They told us they felt well supported by their manager and felt comfortable to share ideas or ask for support. We observed staff confidently seek support from the manager when transitions of the day got overwhelming for some children and staffing levels required to be enhanced. This promoted a positive working atmosphere.

At the time of our inspection the staff team were impacted by long term absences and were relying on supply staff to ensure safe staffing levels were maintained. Whilst there were enough staff working in the service, there were times when staff deployment resulted in the individual needs of children not being met. For example, during toothbrushing routines some children were not supervised and had access to running water. There were also times when staff became task driven and daily routines such as the transition to large group time was disorganised. This impacted on the quality of engagement with children. Further consideration should now be given to deployment of staff to ensure effective use of their differing levels of knowledge, experience and skills. This would provide opportunities for good role modelling and mentoring of less experienced staff to enhance staff development (area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1.
To support children's needs to be met, the provider and management team should ensure that staff deployment considers staff's knowledge, skills and experience as well as children's individual care routines. Daily tasks should be planned for in a way that does not impact on the quality of staff engagement with children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work well together.' (HSCS 3.19).

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 20 May 2024, the service provider must ensure the organisation and deployment of staff meet the needs of all children. To do this the provider must, at a minimum, ensure improvements are made to the management of vacant positions, unplanned absences and unexpected events to support equity and high-quality experiences for all children and families accessing the nursery.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 15(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "My needs are met by the right number of people" (HSCS 3.15).

This requirement was made on 6 February 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The provider had taken sufficient steps to ensure some consistency within the staff team. They had reviewed and improved the induction of supply staff to ensure they receive a more comprehensive introduction to the service and were utilising the national induction resource. Whilst we recognise that sufficient action was taken to meet this requirement, we found that further improvements were needed when deploying staff across the service. Staff should be deployed based on their knowledge, skills and experience to ensure children's needs are consistently met. We have made an area for improvement relating to this within this inspection report (see How good is our staff team?).

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

To support children to achieve their full potential the manager and team should develop the tracking and recording of children's development to inform purposeful and meaningful play and learning experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.' (HSCS 1.25).

This area for improvement was made on 6 February 2024.

Action taken since then

meaningful planning and tracking processes were now in place to support children's care, play and learning. Therefore, this area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to develop and reach their full potential, the manager and team should ensure the environment and resources are designed to support all children's care, play and learning needs.

This is to ensure the care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states "I can use an appropriate mix of private and communal areas, including accessible outdoor spaces, because the premises have been designed or adapted for high quality care and support (HSCS 5.1).

This area for improvement was made on 6 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff were working together to make informed changes to children's play and learning environments. Play zones were mostly well considered, with improved resources and furniture pieces added to create meaningful play experiences. Therefore, this area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the manager and team should continue to embed robust quality assurance and self evaluation processes. This should include, but not be limited to, monitoring children's play and learning experiences, the environment and auditing of medication.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: '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 6 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes including; a service improvement plan, monitoring and auditing systems and self-evaluation had been further developed. Staff and families had been involved in these processes and this was beginning to result in improved experiences for children. Therefore, this area for improvement was 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? | 3 - Adequate |
| 4.3 Staff deployment | 3 - Adequate |

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