

Hop, Skip & Jump Nursery Day Care of Children

St. John's Hall
Russell Place
Forres
IV36 1BL

Telephone: 01309 673 668

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 February 2025

Service provided by:
Beth Campbell

Service provider number:
SP2008009842

Service no:
CS2008178083

About the service

Hop, Skip and Jump Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 24 children, aged from three years to not yet of an age to attend primary school and for 10 children aged between two and three years. The nursery is accommodated within a church hall in the town of Forres, Moray. Children are cared for in two linked playrooms and have access from the playrooms to an outdoor play area. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection on 11 February 2025 to review progress on the requirements and areas for improvement made at a previous inspection. Two inspectors carried out the inspection.

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.

To inform our evaluations we:

- Spoke with children using the service
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and children's experiences
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were benefiting from changes to the way in which personal plan information was being gathered, used in practice and reviewed with families.
- The staff team had begun to use self-evaluation tools to plan, implement and review improvements which impacted positively on children's experiences.
- The leadership team had not yet developed systems for monitoring consistency in practice and evaluating improvements, which would ensure high quality care, play and learning experiences.
- Children would benefit from increased provision of quality resources and interactions that support schematic play.
- Of the two requirements made at the previous inspection, one remains in place. The other requirement was partially met, and for those aspects which had not yet been addressed, we made a new area for improvement. The two areas for improvement made at the previous inspection remain in place.

How good is our setting?

A requirement was made at a previous inspection, to increase children's choices in where they played, and to enhance resources which supported play, learning and development.

Improvements had been made to surface of the outdoor space and this made it more inviting. On the day of the inspection the children visited the library in the morning, and played outside after lunch. Children enjoyed the opportunity to be outdoors and made good use of the spaces available to them. For example, some children had fun drawing round each other with pavement chalk, others spent time in the new sandpit. The spaces and resources on offer outside supported children's learning and reflected their current interests. Staff shared with enthusiasm their plans for making further improvements to the garden during forthcoming in-service days. They told us that the children were benefitting from increased opportunities to choose to play outdoors. We agreed that the changes made so far were benefiting children's wellbeing and development.

Indoors, the smaller playroom contained cosy, inviting spaces. This room was not accessed by many children during the inspection so the impact of changes made here could not be assessed. In the main playroom, children could freely choose from an increased range of open-ended resources. For example, the craft table offered painting experiences which were enjoyed by many of the children. The different types of construction blocks on offer were also popular. We saw evidence in the self-evaluation floorbook of children having a say in the resources that were set out each week. This benefited children as they had some ownership of the resources and spaces. We advised the provider/manager to offer opportunities indoors to explore sensory resources such as sand and water, for those children who chose to stay indoors to play.

During the inspection some opportunities to support children and follow their interest in the resources available were missed, and this led to children becoming disengaged. For example, when some children transported blocks to an enclosed space underneath the piano, they were encouraged to return to the blocks area rather than be supported to continue their interest. We advised that quality interactions, following careful observation of children's play and interest, would enable staff to better support younger children's schematic play. Schematic play describes the way in which young children engage with repeated patterns of

play as they learn about the world around them. This helps to develop their curiosity and imagination, leading to deep engagement as they play. We made an area for improvement for this (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, the provider must ensure that environments and resources support their play, development and learning.

This includes, but is not limited to, providing resources which are stimulating and developmentally appropriate, and enabling staff to support high quality interactions.

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

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31); and

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 1 September 2024, the provider must ensure that children are cared for in a welcoming environment that supports their play and learning.

To achieve this, the provider must at a minimum:

- a) Provide interesting and stimulating, developmentally appropriate resources.
- b) Provide children with choices about the toys they play with and spaces they access.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) 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 (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27); and

'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS 5.23).

This requirement was made on 23 February 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

As reported under key question 2.2, the service has made progress in providing enhanced opportunities for children to choose where they play throughout the day. This is benefiting their wellbeing and development.

The service now needs to focus on ensuring that all children are supported to access a range of rich, stimulating play resources that support and develop their learning. This will support children to develop a range of skills through play, as well as building confidence, self-esteem and creativity.

To support this we have made a new area for improvement under key question 2.2.

Met - outwith timescales

Requirement 2

By 1 September 2024, the provider must ensure improved outcomes for children by implementing effective and robust quality assurance processes.

To achieve this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure that:

- a) Regular and focused monitoring and evaluation is carried out across the setting.
- b) Regular supervision and appraisal meetings are carried out and recorded to support ongoing professional development.

This is to comply with regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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 requirement was made on 23 February 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service had identified ways in which parents and carers could be given more opportunities to be involved with nursery improvements. For example, families had been invited to give feedback on the newly reviewed vision, values and aims. As a result, some changes to the display in the main playroom had been made and this was shared with families via a new parent information board. This supported the service to promote a shared vision that reflected children's and families' aspirations.

Further opportunities were planned for parents and carers to come into the service to review personal planning information and learning journeys with their child's keyworker. These were positive developments which had the potential to enhance outcomes for children. We advised the leadership team to continue to offer regular, meaningful opportunities for families to come into the service and be involved in tailoring quality care and support for their children.

Staff had taken part in training on self-evaluation which was offered by the local authority. With support from local authority officers, they had begun to use the improvement cycle to identify and plan a number of changes, including observations of children's learning and improvements to the outdoor play spaces. Staff told us that they had found support from the local authority team valuable. Additionally, two senior

members of the team had taken part in the Care Inspectorate ELC improvement programme and this had supported them to lead improvements around mealtimes. Children had also been involved in the discussions around mealtimes and this helped to build their confidence and self-esteem.

Whilst a number of improvements had been made, they were not yet consistently embedded in practice. For example, during snack time some children sat on their own whilst staff were attending to other children or tasks nearby. As a result, opportunities for socialising and interactions with other children and staff were missed. We advised the provider/manager to ensure that staff are supported to maintain all improvements previously agreed, and that leaders regularly monitor mealtimes to ensure best practice guidance is followed.

The leadership team had arranged annual review meetings for staff, and at the start of the new session the staff team had benefited from regular meetings. However these formal meetings had not been held since the start of the new year. Whilst staff continued to get together informally to discuss day to day issues, there were fewer regular opportunities to discuss practice, planning and service improvements. As a result, children were not benefiting from shared knowledge and skills within the team. We advised the leadership team to reinstate regular, organised opportunities for staff to share knowledge effectively across the team. This was particularly important as two new members of staff had recently joined the team.

Quality assurance systems to support quality experiences had not yet been established. This had an impact on leaders' ability to identify where practice was inconsistent or not in line with best practice (see mealtime example above). At the last inspection, we advised the provider/manager to develop a clear programme or calendar of monitoring aspects of the service. This had not been carried out.

We agreed to extend the timescale for this requirement, to support the provider/ manager to develop quality assurance systems which support consistently high quality care, play and learning. These systems should include, but are not limited to, monitoring staff interactions and deployment; monitoring how children use spaces and resources, and monitoring the impact of improvements. Records and procedures should also be regularly audited to ensure that they are in line with best practice guidance.

The timescale for this requirement has been extended to Thursday, 1 May 2025.

Not met

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 that children's current needs and preferences are planned for and met, the provider should ensure children's personal plans are used in practice and are reflective of children's needs. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring plans are reviewed and shared with parents/carers, at a minimum of every six months.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2024.

Action taken since then

The service had been supported by the local authority to develop their approach to personal planning. For example, staff had received training on completing and reviewing learner profiles which were used to support individual children's development and learning needs. Parents and carers had been invited into the service to review their child's personal plan and this was a positive development. The manager told us that staff were given protected time to review plans for children in their keyworker group.

Since the last inspection, there had been changes to the team and two new members of staff had been recruited. Staff told us that whilst they gained confidence from working with local authority personnel and were positive about mentoring new staff, this had an impact on the time they had available to complete tasks such as reviewing information. This had the potential to impact on outcomes for children as well as staff wellbeing.

We acknowledged the progress that the service has made in gathering and reviewing children's personal planning information with families. The leadership team now needs to ensure that reviews take place for each child at least every six months. Developing quality assurance systems to monitor review dates and consistency will support the provider/manager to achieve this.

This area for improvement has not been met and will remain in place.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure that children are kept safe and healthy, the provider should make sure that the potential spread of infection is minimised. This should include but is not limited to developing nappy changing areas and supporting children to wash their hands.

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Handwashing facilities were provided by two portable stations within the main playroom. These contained water which was at a suitable temperature for handwashing, and soap and paper towels were available at each station. Children knew their handwashing routines well and eagerly queued to use the facilities. We agreed that bringing the handwashing facilities into the playroom had the potential to benefit children by minimising the risk of the spread of infection. However at times, staff deployed at these areas were also supporting children at the nearby craft table and other activities. As a result, children were not consistently supported to wash their hands effectively.

We advised the leadership team to review staff deployment within the playroom, particularly at busy times such as mealtimes, to ensure that handwashing could be effectively supported. We further advised that routine monitoring of the playroom could help to ensure that support with handwashing was consistently available. This would help to keep children safe by minimising the risk of the spread of infection.

No changes to the nappy changing room had taken place since the last inspection. The provider/manager informed us that a meeting with the hall owner had been arranged to take forward improvements that would meet best practice guidance.

This area for improvement has not been met and will remain in place.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.