

Puddleduck Nursery Day Care of Children

Kirkfield
Dunkeld
PH8 OAE

Telephone: 01350 727117

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 March 2025

Service provided by:
Jill Rogers

Service provider number:
SP2024000110

Service no:
CS2024000246

About the service

Puddleduck Nursery is daycare of children service, registered to provide care provide a care service to a maximum of 21 children from 2 not yet attending primary school at any one time

Other conditions unique to the service include,

- The outdoor space has been taken into account when agreeing the maximum number of children aged 2 - not yet attending school. Children must have access to the outdoor space at all times.

- From 20 January 2025 till 18 April 2025 (or before if the child leaves the service) a named child may attend the service (as identified in the variation request dated 20 December 2024).

The nursery operates from a single storey building in the rural area of Little Dunkeld, Perthshire. The children are accommodated within one playroom. There are two smaller rooms, used as a curiosity room and as a changing facilities. There is a small office and a separate small staff room, out with the main premises. The children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor area that is accessible from the main playroom. The nursery has a secure door entry system in place.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 and 4 March 2025 between 09:30 and 14:45. One inspector 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.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with 4 children using the service
- received 3 completed questionnaire from parents and carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

Children were well nurtured and cared for. Families were supported to be involved across different aspects of their child's care and support which enhanced positive attachments.

Staff had successfully created a positive atmosphere, where children and families felt comfortable and safe. Staff were attuned to children's needs and respected their rights.

Staff were developing children's play spaces indoors and outdoors to create interest and curiosity. Children would benefit from staff providing more provocation, to provide opportunities for challenge and stimulation.

Most staff had a good understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice, and used this to support quality play and learning experiences. Some use of effective questioning extended children's thinking and supported some stimulating and challenging play and learning experiences.

The manager had some good quality assurance systems which supported self-evaluation. Quality assurance and improvement priorities could be more focussed to support continuous improvement.

The deployment of the staff team enabled them to be fully engaged and present in children's care, play and learning. Parents knew staff well and were able to share the positive impact they had had on their children's experience and outcomes.

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?	3 - Adequate
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 were nurtured through daily experiences. Staff led with kind and respectful interactions which validated and empowered children. One parent told us, "staff are very friendly, open and seem to care about the children. My child loves them all". This impacted positively on children's outcomes.

Children's wellbeing benefitted from effective personal planning. This included key information such as, their needs, routines and likes and dislikes. Support strategies were in place for children who required additional support. This ensured children to receive consistent care. Chronologies were used to capture significant events in children's lives. This helped identify where early interventions could support children to thrive. As a result, staff knew children well and provided care that met their needs.

Children's snack and meal time experiences were nurturing, sociable and safe. Staff sat with children and promoted good conversations. This enabled children to build on their social and emotional skills. There was scope to allow children more independence as part of their meal time experience. Some families were unaware of what their child ate each day. For example, one parent told us "I never know what my child has eaten or has been offered to eat". Another shared that, "There used to be a snack board displayed every day but that has gone". Sharing this information daily with families would support children to receive balanced diets that meet their cultural and dietary requirements.

Families told us they felt included within their nursery. They were invited into the service as part of Stay and Play sessions each month. Staff designed these around children and families needs and interests. A family learning practitioner was engaging with children and families to promote positive care, play and learning opportunities. For example, Play on Pedals, a training programme that supports and develops the cycling skills of nursery-aged children was recently well received. As a result, children benefitted from good partnership working.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and Learning

Children had fun and were busy in their play experiences. Staff designed the playrooms well to promote a good range of play and learning experiences. Children enjoyed water play, role play in the home corner and dressing up as superheroes. Parents told us their children enjoyed spending time at nursery, for example, one parent shared, "It seems to be a good variety of experiences, and both indoor and outdoor. Various sensory experiences, all types of different craft media and textures". This supported good quality care, play and learning.

Children had some involvement in leading their play and learning. Staff encouraged children to share their views, opinions and ideas through mind maps, questions and reflective moments. This supported some choice and independence for children. Staff were developing the balance between responsive and intentional planning to better empower children and ensure they are fully involved in their play and learning. For example, a Car Park system had been introduced to note key interests to take forward into next stages of planning. This showed children that their views and opinions mattered.

Most staff had a good understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice, and used this to support quality play and learning experiences. Some use of effective questioning extended children's thinking and supported some stimulating and challenging play and learning experiences. On a few occasions, opportunities were missed to enhance children's play and learning. Professional development opportunities were being sought to support children's curiosities and widened their thinking.

Children's experiences and achievements were recorded on online learning journals. This supported most parents to feel involved and informed. Individual observations were regularly recorded. Whilst these showed children's experiences, they did not always fully evaluate their achievements. This would support staff to track children's individual learning and ensure children receive breadth and balance.

Children benefitted from a good use of the community. Staff skilfully planned opportunities that supported their play and learning. One parent told us, "They go out of the nursery a lot, to Birnam woods, the parks and orchard. They are well integrated into the local community". As a result, children were exploring their wider world, while developing a sense of belonging within their community.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 2.2 children experience high quality facilities

A significant amount of work had been done to improve the quality of the environment. The entrance was welcoming for children, families and visitors. It was decorated to provide useful information such as, up and coming events and staffing information. This enabled a positive ethos that encouraged everyone to feel included in the service.

Some areas of the environment, such as the home corner appeared sparse. Children lacked loose parts and real life materials to fully explore and incorporate into their play. There was also scope to add more warmth to the spaces, for example, with soft furnishings and additional lighting. This would create a more nurturing and homely feel for children.

Staff were developing children's play spaces indoors and outdoors to create interest and curiosity. Whilst children enjoyed playing, at times, they moved around the space not engaging fully in quality play and learning. Children would benefit from staff providing more provocation, to provide opportunities for challenge and stimulation.

The setting and equipment were safe, secure and well-maintained. Good arrangements were in place for the monitoring and maintenance of equipment to ensure that damaged items were promptly fixed or replaced. For example, children's taps were not producing warm water. The manager was aware of this and in the process of getting these repaired.

Children were supported to be healthy through effective infection prevention and control procedures. Handwashing took place by children and staff at appropriate times. This helped to minimise the risk of spread of infection.

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure children and families' personal information was safe and

secure. Paperwork was stored securely within locked cupboards. This ensured confidentiality was maintained and complied with best practice guidance.

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 manager and staff fully engaged with the inspection process, demonstrating a positive attitude towards change and improvement. They were motivated and responsive to suggestions made during the inspection to continue to improve outcomes for children and families. There was a positive working environment, where staff felt confident to share ideas to initiate change and were encouraged to share the responsibilities.

The vision, values and aims of the service were continually reviewed and updated to ensure that they reflected the welcoming and community ethos. The manager recognised the importance of including children, families and staff in the process. This supported everyone to know what is important for the service to meet the needs of children and their families.

Children and families were involved and could influence change within the setting. Staff sent out focussed questionnaires to gather opinions and asked parents directly for their views. There was some evidence of suggestions and ideas being taken forward to support improvement. This was not always fed back to parents to show them the impact their voices had.

A quality assurance calendar was in place and supported good time management. Monitoring areas of the service such as, quality of staff interactions, children's next steps and online learning took place to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Some monitoring was carried out informally, such as audits of the environment. Whilst this supported some improvement, a more formal approach would ensure actions are recorded and less likely to be missed.

There was an improvement plan in place. Priorities identified for improvement was the development of the outdoor space and staffs skills. These were based on information gathered about the service, as well as consideration of good practice. Staff had a good understanding of the improvement plan, demonstrating that everyone was working together towards shared goals. This supported a positive culture of improvement.

Staff were empowered to improve the service through continuous professional development. They told us they were recently inspired by a visit to a neighbouring service. This resulted in them decluttering play spaces and creating an inviting art station for children. The manager was keen to continue to provide leadership opportunities for staff that aligned with their own skills and interests.

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

The deployment of staff was well managed and effective in meeting children's needs. Children were cared for by a consistent staff team who worked well together. One parent described the service as a "caring environment, small groups and with regular staff. My child loves going and always wants to stay longer".

The staff team had a balance of skills and experience which were used to promote positive experiences for children across the day. They worked well together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. They communicated effectively with each other and worked flexibly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

Staff were empowered to deploy themselves and respond to the needs of the children. This enabled staff to follow children's needs and interests without compromising the experiences of others. Transitions were seamless and well planned, with children being comfortable about what was happening next. During busier times of the day, routines had been established which promoted children's safety.

Staff new to the setting were supported through an induction process which assisted them to gain confidence in their new role and meet children's needs. Support was also offered during the regular visits to the playroom by the manager. Team meetings were an opportunity for staff to share skills and knowledge.

All parents told us they were happy with the care and support their children received. One parent added, "It is a small nursery with a family feel. My child knows all the staff well as it is a small and long-standing team. They feel safe and nurtured there, and has developed over the years. It is a nice mix of relaxed free play and gentle introduction to curiosity and learning". This demonstrated the positive impact the service had on children.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
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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