

The Ladybird Development Group

Day Care of Children

St. Gerardine's School
St. Gerardine's Road
Lossiemouth
IV31 6JX

Telephone: 01343 814 618

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 April 2025

Service provided by:
The Ladybird Development Group a
Scottish Charitable Incorporated
Organisation

Service provider number:
SP2015012638

Service no:
CS2015343704

About the service

The Ladybird Development Playgroup is a day care of children service. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 15 children from birth to not yet attending primary school. There were 11 children present over the inspection. The service is provided by The Ladybird Development Group a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The service operates from 2 playrooms adjoining St. Gerardine's primary school. The large playroom has a kitchen and provides direct access to large fenced garden. There is a small decked outdoor play space accessed from the small playroom. There is a multi-sensory room and a toilet/nappy changing room.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 April 2025, between 8:30 and 15:15 and 30 April 2025 9:00 to 12:15. 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 information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with three parents
- received 14 questionnaires from families and nine from staff
- spoke with two staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Staff were attentive, caring and kind that was conducive to children's wellbeing, development and confidence. This contributed to good outcomes for children.
- Staff knew the children well as they were working proactively with families and had established warm and positive relationships.
- The skilled interactions of staff helped to promote children's creativity and curiosity through play, that supported their learning and development.
- Children benefited from being cared for in a comfortable and welcoming setting that was well furnished and included equipment/aids, that supported children's individual needs.
- To support the privacy, health and wellbeing of children and staff, the manager/provider should ensure that nappy changing arrangements follow good practice guidance.
- The manager was creating conditions where everyone felt well-informed to share responsibility for changes leading to improvement.

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?	5 - Very 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?

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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children's wellbeing was being well supported as staff responses towards each of the children were thoughtful, calm and respectful. Lots of eye contact between staff and children, smiles and gentle touch, helped caring and nurturing relationships to be established.

Where children needed support with personal care the discreet and warm interactions of the staff supported children's confidence. A snoezelen, (multi-sensory room,) provided a soothing and stimulating space, that helped to reduce children's agitation and anxiety and to regain a sense of calm.

Children enjoyed snack which was unhurried and calm. It was a positive social experience as children sat together at the table. Staff sat with the children and they were able to focus on, and respond to their individual needs. It also provided a rich opportunity to promote close attachment. Food choices reflected current guidance and complied with children's dietary needs and/or food preferences. Fresh water was available to the children during snack. Children were offered drinks during the session and water bottles were taken when children were on outings. We suggested that having drinks more visible within the playroom would assist staff in encouraging children to remain hydrated.

Staff knew the children very well, as they were working proactively with families and had established positive relationships with them. Links and visits to the setting by other professionals, helped to identify strategies that were based on individual needs and supported children's development. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the potential impact of adverse childhood experiences, and implemented supports that helped to build the resilience of children and families. Children attending the service were non-verbal or had limited language. Staff confidently used core words, visual cues and sign language, it helped children with communication, to gain understanding and ease frustration.

Families had been involved in the creation and review of the child's personal plan, such as health, interests and likes/dislikes, personal care that helped to support overall wellbeing. It was recognised that almost all children were part of the child's plan process, families and professionals also shared information. We discussed the benefits of the personal plan being consistently reviewed with families, to help ensure continuity of care and also enabled staff to respond promptly to changes. Chronologies, also helped to identify children's needs and directed actions to support them well. The manager and staff had recently changed the format so that it captured and monitored relevant information.

Ref: Practice guide to chronologies - hub.careinspectorate.com

Parents told us that they felt involved in all aspects of their child's care, they felt able to speak with staff during handovers and felt included in discussions about their child's development and progress. They also appreciated the guidance and information shared by the staff that helped them to meet their child's needs. Comments included:

'They really take the time to get to know everything about your child and there needs and offer help/advice and nothing is too much trouble for any of the staff'

'I have seen so much progress in my little one after she has started going to Ladybird and it is so good how much it has helped her come along in her development stages'

'Ladybird are always so involved with making sure they are up to date with any changes with my child's needs'

'Ladybird and parents work as a team - there is no other way if you want your child to progress'.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were having fun in their play and were being encouraged to select items for play, where able. A young child was being supported to select items for cooking in the play house and staff modelled and talked about the toy kettle, pouring drinks which the child then copied. Creative approaches such as water, sand play and dough helped children to explore, learn and develop. A baby was enjoying holding and gripping maracas and the sound they made that supported their senses and fine motor skills (small muscle movement). Mobility/standing aids enabled children to build large muscle strength through gradual movement.

Children sat close to each other and staff for a welcome song. They were beginning to use facial recognition and names and smile at each other with the support of staff. Staff spontaneously sang rhymes with the children, counted and talked with the children during play that also helped with language and communication skills.

Parents told us that their child's development was always supported through interesting and fun play experiences. Comments included:

'My child has plenty of opportunities with sensory play and physio support, with the sensory room my child loves it'

'She enjoys ladybird and every task/ activity they do meets our daughter's needs excellently and supports her development massively'

'Physio, OT, SALT, play, learn, communication, everything and more is done at ladybird'

Where able, children moved around the play areas confidently and they were clearly comfortable and familiar with the surroundings. Children were supported play outside and benefit from the fresh air and freedom of movement. A child was having fun in the large sand pit helping to make sand castles from a variety of containers. A child was enjoying the sensation of the net basket swing, and the breeze on their face.

Staff used their knowledge and practice well to support high quality play and learning experiences that took account of children's individual needs. Their skilled interactions helped to promote children's creativity and curiosity through play. Staff provided support to the same children, which enabled them to get to know them very well. They continually observed and assessed children's progression, their achievements were recognised, recorded and shared with families.

Children were able to make connections with their own and wider communities that enhanced their play and learning. They included visits to the beach/woodlands, where they were able to feel the sand under their feet and splash in the water. Children also went swimming, to the hydrotherapy pool, library and woodland walks.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children benefited from being cared for in a comfortable and welcoming setting that was well furnished. Windows surrounding the play room provided ventilation and natural light, that helped to promote children's psychological wellbeing.

The indoor and outdoor environments had been sensitively arranged and took account of the children's stages of development and learning. Spaces reflected children's needs and curiosities, with appropriate resources and materials to support learning. The manager had recognised that some areas would benefit from a de-clutter, particularly in relation to the storage of mobility aids and equipment. Some steps had already been taken to address this.

Staff and children followed good hand hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of infection. Children washed their hands well with support/supervision from staff, such as following outdoor play and before and after eating. Staff had suitable personal protective equipment such as disposable gloves and aprons, that helped to support the wellbeing of children. Staff had completed food hygiene training that supported food safety.

Overall the premises were clean and well maintained, staff had an understanding of cleaning arrangements within the service. Although, facilities within the bathroom/nappy changing area should be changed to further enhance privacy and dignity of the children and to ensure robust infection control. Equipment was being stored in the nappy changing area, there was not a hand washing sink adjacent to the 0-2 changing area and the bespoke changing unit did not support staff when lifting children or children's overall wellbeing. The manager was prompted to take action to address the issues (see area for improvement 1).

Staff worked well together to remove risks to the children both indoors and outdoors. We suggested that the garden area was checked prior to use, as some litter had gathered around the bushes. To support the safety and wellbeing of the children the manager would ensure that the sand pit was covered when it was not in use. Staff worked on a 1:1 basis with the children at all times both indoors and outdoors, and outside in the wider community. It helped to ensure children were accounted for at all times, that their activities were not compromised and that they were supported to enjoy challenging, fun play experiences. We referred the manager to SIMOA (keeping children safe) campaign - hub.careinspectorate.com. The documentation was beneficial for consideration of security and continued assurance, of a safe environment for children both inside and outside.

Areas for improvement

1. To support the privacy, health and wellbeing of children and staff, the manager/provider should ensure that nappy changing arrangements follow good practice guidance. This should include, but is not limited to, providing appropriate changing facilities.

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

'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes.' (HSCS 5.18) and 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

This is to ensure infection control practices are consistent with the NHS Scotland & HPS Scotland document,

Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings); and
Care Inspectorate document, Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders)

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The vision for the setting had been reviewed with children, families and staff. It helped everyone to know what was important to the setting to meet the needs of children and families. They were displayed on the entrance to the setting. The manager was creating conditions where all people felt well-informed to share responsibility for the change process.

Parents had been given the opportunity to share their views about the service and suggest any areas for improvement. Following consultation parents a bespoke information/training session was offered to parents to support them in communicating with their child. Parents were able to chat with staff at drop off and they were invited into the setting when dropping off and picking up their child. Staff used visual aids well to help children communicate and followed their lead in relation to exploration and interests. We discussed the benefits of meaningful parental involvement with the manager.

Ref: Me, my family and my childcare setting: A practice note for building stronger connections and meaningful relationships - careinspectorate.com.

Parent told us that they always welcomed and had been invited to share their views. Comments included:

'The staff always remind me I am always welcome to stay and play to see what they normally get up to in the sessions'

'I have visited ladybird numerous times to see and play with our daughter, they take on board parental views'

'We have helped with children in need, fundraising, stay and play, discussions amongst parents and I like to keep up to date with the board meeting notes, etc'.

Staff had a clear understanding of and shared daily roles such as meet and greet at drop off/pick up, snack preparation that helped to ensure smooth delivery of the service. Formal staff meetings took place in a protected environment. The manager recognised the value of such meetings and opportunities for staff to share practice and reflect together. A clear meeting minute and action plan from such meetings also helped to identify who had responsibility for change improvement.

The service improvement plan helped to identify and inform improvement in the quality of service to children and families. The support of the local authority early years team had enabled a new format of self-evaluation to be implemented that recorded and monitored improvement. The service improvement journey was displayed on the wall within the setting which helped it to remain a living/working document. It was enabling clarity of purpose and direction to be developed. We advised the manager to ensure that the format used measured the impact/differences it made on outcomes for children and families. Quality assurance systems that included observation and examination of practice to identify inconsistencies, were also being established.

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.

Leaders recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed during the day, the 1:1 ratio of staff to children helped to support their wellbeing and safety.

Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communication with families. Parents told us that they had strong connections with staff who were always welcoming and approachable. Comments included:

'All the staff are very approachable and helpful with any concerns'

'My child's key workers are amazing, as are all staff at ladybird'

'If we are ever needing help they are there'.

Daily responsibilities were shared between the staff to support children's experiences across the day. Staff breaks were planned to minimise the impact on the children whilst enabling staff to refresh.

The consistent staff team worked well together, there was a culture of support and respect. Staff were suitably deployed within the service. They were also proactive in recognising where gaps existed or where staff and children needed some help and support. Staff communicated well with each other when a task took them away from their responsibilities.

Children experienced a warm and respectful atmosphere. Staff interactions were attentive, caring and kind that was conducive to children's wellbeing, development and confidence. This contributed to good outcomes for 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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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