Denman Pre-school
Day Care of Children

Westdyke Leisure Centre
Westdyke Avenue
Westhill
AB32 6QX

Telephone: 07727617627

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 November 2022

Service provided by:
Denman Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003000488

Service no:
CS2003002617

About the service

Denman Preschool provides a daycare of children service in Westhill, Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 20 children aged between 2 and a half years to those not yet attending primary school. A maximum of 8 children aged under 3 will attend the morning sessions.

The service is located within Westdyke Leisure Centre situated in Westhill, a suburb of Aberdeenshire, and is provided by a committee of volunteers. The service is close to the local school and other local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 1 November 2022 between 09:15 and 14:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 3 November 2022. The inspection was carried out by two early years 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:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with four members of staff and management
- reviewed documents
- spoke with eleven children using the service and nine of their family members.

Key messages

• Children had free-flow access to outdoor play in a well-equipped garden.
• Children developed independence and life skills during snack and mealtimes.
• Children were cared for by staff who knew them and their families well.
• Staff should develop the experiences on offer to children indoors to take account of children's interests, development, and learning.
• The service should further develop quality assurance and self-evaluation demonstrating progression and impact from consultations with children and families.

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?	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

The staff team knew the children and their families well. Staff showed a genuine interest and knowledge of children's home life, sharing conversations together about recent holidays. Parents commented positively about the relationships children had with staff. One parent stated that their child had 'developed fantastic relationships with staff and felt very happy and confident around them'. Staff supported children to resolve minor conflicts. It would be beneficial for staff to involve children in creating rules for the nursery, supporting them to engage positively in play, and learn to express their emotions. This could promote a positive and restorative ethos where children were supported to be confident and responsible.

Detailed personal plans were in place for each child which provided accurate and current information to support staff to meet the needs of the children. Plans included children's likes, dislikes, and significant information. Parents confirmed that they were involved in creating these plans and shared that they are regularly involved in reviewing these plans. Care plans were in place to support children with additional support needs. These included strategies and actions to support children to progress and achieve. Staff should ensure that these strategies are consistently implemented to support children. Staff could consider using strategies more widely with all children, for example, Makaton signing could be used as part of the daily routine. This would promote an inclusive environment where all communication was respected and valued.

Children's independence and life skills were developed during both snack and mealtime experiences. During snack, children helped to prepare and chop the cucumber and banana and at lunchtime the children served themselves. The lunchtime experience was unhurried, and children had time to enjoy their meal as well as being offered more if requested. Staff sat with the children which allowed them to provide help and support when required. Staff shared that they would normally eat with the children, however we did not observe this happening. This practice would allow staff to role model good eating habits and use of cutlery. Children were empowered and enabled to make independent choices, developing their life skills.

Chronologies were in place and detailed significant events in children's lives. Staff understood their role within the child protection policy and procedures. The manager should ensure that concerns are only recorded on the appropriate form, or in the chronology within a child's personal plan. This would ensure children's information was kept confidential and was stored safely and securely.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Play was mainly child led and promoted ownership of children's experiences. Children's engagement in play was purposeful and meaningful when outdoors. For example, children used loose parts when outdoors to create an obstacle course promoting problem solving and creativity. The outdoor environment provided opportunities for developing numeracy and literacy throughout play. Children had opportunities to plant and grow their own vegetables which promoted the seed to plate concept. Staff shared that children had opportunities to cook these during firepit experiences. These outdoor opportunities supported children to progress and achieve. Parents shared that there were many opportunities for outdoor learning within the nursery's outdoor space.

Children were supported to choose resources to set up the indoor environment each day. Children frequently moved between play experiences and there was minimal engagement in play. It was discussed that staff should reflect on and evaluate the indoor play environment and resources available to the children. This could support the team to provide a richer and more nurturing space to encourage quality play experiences. Areas should be reviewed to consider challenge, creativity, and critical thinking across all experiences. These changes could support children to extend their interests and help to sustain their engagement in play.

At times staff were responsive to children's play. For example, children were playing with trains and a staff member offered to get the train track to extend their play. Engagement from staff was not sustained causing children to lose interest and move away from their play. Staff should consider their role within play, knowing when it is appropriate to stand back and observe, or when to interact to extend their play and learning. This would support children to extend their play and interests and become more engaged in fun play experiences.

Observations had been developed and were beginning to identify specific learning within play experiences. Staff shared that children's next steps were being further developed, and there was an overview of learning for each child. The service should continue to develop their observations to detail specific learning, clear next steps, and progression. Parents shared that children's observation books came home termly and they commented that they like to see what their child has been learning.

Floorbooks recorded the activities children had participated in. Children were given ownership of these as they were empowered to be included in their experiences adding their own drawings. These could be further developed to highlight specific learning, progression and skills achieved during play. This could enhance children's involvement in developing and reflecting on their learning and play experiences.

The children were supported to develop an awareness of their local community through regular visits to the nearby woodland to explore the natural environment. Staff provided opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy learning throughout these trips. This supported the children to become more aware of what was available to them within their local community and develop a sense of belonging.

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 benefitted from a safe and secure setting with free flow access to the outdoor environment. The outdoor area promoted opportunities for children to develop a range of skills including literacy, numeracy, imaginative play, creativity, problem solving, and assessing risks. Staff could consider reflecting on the adult role to further extend these opportunities for children. An outdoor shelter was well resourced and provided an all-weather environment for children to explore. Displays within the shelter could be reviewed to focus on children's current interests or seasonal learning. This would ensure that children's experiences were relevant and motivating, promoting, and extending their engagement in play.

Children's artwork was displayed around the room to provide a welcoming environment and wall displays had been created to highlight themes and interests. Staff should continue to review the experiences on offer indoors to promote a nurturing, stimulating and challenging environment to promote fun play experiences. Defining areas for children to play could enhance their engagement, learning and develop a respect for their environment.

Risk assessments were in place for indoors, outdoors, and specific play experiences and activities. These were robust and included all relevant information to ensure children's safety. Children's paperwork was stored safely and securely. This ensured children's privacy was maintained and respected.

Effective infection control practices were in place to minimise the spread of infection. This included hand washing by staff and children. Surfaces were cleaned before and after use during snack and mealtimes. This ensured that children's health and wellbeing was maintained.

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 were committed to improving quality play experiences and outcomes for children and families. For example, the outdoor area had been extended and developed in consultation with staff, children, and families to provide free-flow access and enriched experiences. Parents spoke positively of the changes to the outdoor environment sharing that their children loved being outside. This promoted children's wellbeing, fine and gross motor skills, and opportunities to be curious and explore.

The views of families were regularly sought, and positive feedback was evidenced within the setting. Parents commented positively about communication and said this was carried out face-to-face, by email and through a private Facebook page. It would be beneficial to evaluate this feedback and share actions taken forward and their impact with families. This would promote a continuous cycle of self-evaluation for improvement, valuing the contributions of families. Stay and play sessions were in the process of being reintroduced which would encourage parents to be more involved in children's play and learning. Parents commented that they would like more opportunities to be involved in the life of the setting. Families supported the setting with regular fundraising events and shared their skills with the children. For example, a parent helped to build a workbench and planters with the children. This supported the improvement of the setting and promoted a celebration of working together.

The setting had an improvement plan in place which was in the process of being developed for this year. The document 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' was used to self-evaluate some areas of practice. For example, the team had highlighted the need to further develop the lunchtime experience to ensure staff sat and ate with children. It would be beneficial to continue to evaluate identified areas for improvement to demonstrate progression, and the impact of changes made. The setting could consider how to involve children in identifying and embedding improvement within self-evaluation. This would promote positive outcomes for children as practice would be continuously reviewed, ensuring quality experiences, and valuing their ideas.

Staff were encouraged to share their views, strengths, achievements, areas for development and specific training required during annual appraisal meetings. To support ongoing evaluation, professional dialogue and reflection, the manager could consider implementing formal peer support and monitoring within the service. This would develop staff practice, ongoing reflection of the environment, and would embed quality play experiences for children.

The service had recently participated in the Care Inspectorate's ELC Improvement Programme, which had supported numeracy and literacy to be developed outdoors. Staff had taken this learning forward and had created action plans which further developed and enhanced numeracy and literacy outdoors. This supported professional development within the staff team and developed play experiences outdoors for children.

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

Staff knew the children well and parents confirmed that staff had developed strong relationships with their children. Staff were enthusiastic about their role and committed to improving their skills and knowledge. Recent training had supported staff to develop an understanding of outdoor play experiences, promoting children's curiosity, creativity, and knowledge of the environment. This contributed to promoting positive outcomes for children.

Staff deployment was well managed by the manager and ratios were always met throughout the day. Staff breaks were taken at appropriate times to ensure there was no impact on children's play and learning. Lunchtime was well managed to provide specific support for children when required. This ensured an inclusive social experience for all children.

Staff communicated well with each other when moving between spaces within the indoor and outdoor environment. This ensured a safe environment for children. At times, staff were task orientated which resulted in some missed opportunities for high quality engagement and interaction. For example, staff tidied up around children's play. Staff should consider how this could be more effectively managed to minimise any impact on children. This could support the service to enhance children's engagement in their play, and further develop high quality interactions.

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 children are supported to progress and achieve, the manager should further review adult-led activities to reduce the disruption to children's play and increase children's choice and ability to lead their own learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards 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)

This area for improvement was made on 22 March 2019.

Action taken since then
Play was now mainly child led to support children to lead their own learning.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To help safeguard children and ensure their health and well being, the provider should ensure all parent helpers who regularly support the service obtain a PVG disclosure.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that, "I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited." (HSCS 4.24)

This area for improvement was made on 22 March 2019.

Action taken since then
There are now no parent helpers involved within the setting. If parent helpers were to become involved again, the manager would ensure Disclosure checks were carried out.

This area for improvement has 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.

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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 cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

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.