Inverbrothock Playgroup
Day Care of Children

Inverbrothock Primary School
East Kirkton Road
Arbroath
DD11 4GR

Telephone: 07947 241 514

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 February 2023

Service provided by:
Inverbrothock Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003000566

Service no:
CS2003002872

About the service

Inverbrothock playgroup provides a daycare of children service in Arbroath. The service is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 24 children from the age of two years and not yet attending primary school.

The service is based in a residential area of Arbroath and is close to local shops, parks, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 February 2023 between 08:30 and 15:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 14 February 2023. The inspection was carried out by an 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:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed documents
- spoke with children using the service and 12 of their family members.

Key messages

• Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them well.

• Children benefitted from an inviting, welcoming and purposeful environment.

• The service should continue to develop a child led approach throughout the day, providing more opportunities for children to lead their play.

• Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care and effective partnerships.

• Management and staff were committed to the ongoing improvement and development of the service.

• The service had a dedicated staff team who communicated and deployed themselves well, to supervise children's safety and wellbeing.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Positive relationships had been formed between children and staff. Staff were kind, caring, gentle and nurturing in their interactions with children. Staff were responsive to children's requests and cues, offering comfort and reassurance when needed. For example, staff were observed talking to children about their feelings, helping them to feel happy and safe, to engage in play. One parent commented, 'We are extremely happy with the care and support our daughter receives at playgroup'. This contributed to the positive attachments that had been formed.

Mealtimes were mostly sociable and calm. The service provided home cooked meals, which all children participated in. Staff used information regarding children's food preferences and allergies to plan meals. Children and staff ate together, which created a sociable environment. We suggested reviewing opportunities for children to develop their life skills and independence during mealtimes, by preparing snack and selecting foods during lunch. Staff should review the pace of the lunchtime experience, as children were observed to become restless due to long wait times between meals and returning to play. This would promote a relaxed and unhurried mealtime experience.

Staff had a good understanding of child development and used this knowledge to work in partnership with families. Regular review meetings provided opportunities for families to be involved in updating their children's personal plans. Parents commented positively about the opportunities they had to meet with their child's key worker. An audit was in place to ensure children's personal plans and permission forms were updated within six months. Staff were mostly proactive in seeking guidance from other professionals, however, we found that some information did not reflect children's current needs. The service should review personal plans to ensure the information recorded reflects children's needs, seeking advice from other professionals to support this. This would promote a shared understanding of the strategies required to help children to reach their full potential.

Medication was stored appropriately and was easily accessible. A medication audit was in place and information held was updated every three months. Staff and parents should sign forms to ensure paperwork is effective in meeting children's wellbeing needs.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were leading their own play and freely choosing which spaces to access. Children engaged in sustained play for extended periods of time, for example, children at the craft table explored a range of loose parts and junk modelling. One child commented, 'Tomorrow is Valentine's Day, I'm making it for people we love'. This demonstrated that children were able to use their knowledge of seasonal events within their play and learning. One child was observed at the play dough table exploring the different sized hearts. The child spent time carefully placing the small heart inside the big heart, creating two hearts and was proud of his achievements. This evidenced that children had the freedom to persevere and explore their own learning.

Children's learning and development, benefitted from being able to free flow between indoor and outdoor play, for most of the day. Staff supported children to investigate and explore the movement of balls in the outside area, through effective questioning and pondering. Opportunities for numeracy learning were promoted, as staff asked the children how many more balls they would need to reach the top of the pipes. Staff and children engaged in a shared laughter and enjoyment as the balls were released. This valued children as leaders in their learning, as they had the freedom to be curious and experiment.

We observed the pace of the day and balance of spontaneous and planned learning was at times adult led. During free play times we observed children to be highly engaged, independent and their choices and ideas respected. Staff interactions promoted children's curiosity, encouraged problem solving and challenged thinking during free flow play. We found that children's play was interrupted too often throughout the day to participate in adult-led experiences, such as extended group times over the lunch period. Several children were not engaged during these times and sat waiting for prolonged periods. We asked that the service review the daily routine to provide more opportunities for children to actively lead their play.

Floor books evidenced learning and valued children's voice, as this was gathered through mind maps. Staff effectively developed opportunities for home learning, for example, when learning about birds, children were encouraged to feed and observe the birds in their gardens.

Photographs and comments from parents were recorded in the floor book, which developed a shared learning approach. This valued children's parents as educators and provided them opportunities to be involved in their child's learning. Floor books made links to best practice documentation, for example, 'Realising the Ambition', which informed planning. Children were keen to share their learning, which evidenced that they were active participants in their experiences.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a setting that was clean, inviting and welcoming. The playroom benefitted from natural light and ventilation. Furniture and resources were of a high standard and organised to promote free flow play. Children had ample space to move around freely and made good use of the environment. One parent commented, 'the playgroup was such a happy environment to be in'. The environment was warm and provided nurturing spaces for children to engage in quieter experiences. A homely ethos had been created, with children's interests at the heart of planning for resources.

The indoor environment provided access to a range of purposeful experiences, which provided challenge and developed children's curiosities. There was a range of loose parts play and choice across experiences, which developed children's imaginations, curiosity and creativity. Areas were well resourced and labelled with photographs, which promoted children's emerging literacy skills.

Outdoor play was an established part of the day, demonstrating staff awareness of the benefits this had on children's health and wellbeing. The outdoor area was well resourced with purposeful and meaningful resources, to facilitate children's play and learning. Children were observed accessing storage containers to facilitate their interests and learning. Children had opportunities to plant and grow with floor books evidencing children's interest in the bulbs currently growing. One parent commented, 'The garden area is fantastic and areas like the tree house give our child an excellent opportunity to use his imagination'. The environment was well maintained and risk assessments were regularly reviewed to maintain safe staff practice. We discussed children's access and use of helmets to maintain their safety when accessing bikes and scooters. Staff should ensure children's safe use of helmets is promoted, as this would maintain children's safety.

Systems were in place to record any accidents or incidents and these were reviewed informally by staff. We suggested implementing formal reviews to ensure any recurring events detail actions taken. This would further maintain children's wellbeing.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place in line with current guidelines. Children and staff regularly washed their hands throughout the day. Toilets and changing areas were clean and accessible for children. This ensured children's health needs were met.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children and families benefitted from a service whose vision and aims promoted a positive learning environment. Staff were a motivated, happy and enthusiastic team who created high quality outcomes for children. One parent commented, 'I feel like the children have many great learning opportunities, we get daily updates of different provocations the playgroup have set up, ready for the children to enter the setting'. This created an ethos of value and respect.

Effective communication took place through a variety of methods, including, informally at drop off and collection, newsletters and a closed Facebook page. Parents commented positively on the communications received and shared that they are consulted on their children's learning at regular review meetings. One parent commented, 'The playgroup is fantastic, I cannot speak highly enough about it and the staff'. We suggested reviewing opportunities to formally gather families views, to support the ongoing improvements within the service. This would provide further opportunities for parents to have their views listened to, acted on and value them as active participants in the improvement of the service.

Families were being welcomed back into the service through planned stay and play sessions. We observed parents engaging with their children in play and having the opportunity to participate in discussions with their child's key worker. One child commented, 'My mum is coming to play today. I am going to show her everything'. This demonstrated children's pride in sharing their learning with their families.

Robust systems were in place, which promoted a culture of continuous improvement. A detailed improvement plan and quality assurance calendar were in place. The improvement plans highlighted monthly tasks and these were effectively reviewed and evaluated. Staff engaged in challenge question discussions and highlighted elements of practice to evidence this. We suggested considering the impact the evidence gathered has on outcomes for children, to highlight areas for development and success. This would further embed the ongoing improvements within the service.

Staff met regularly as a team, which provided opportunities to reflect on improvements, planning and discuss children's needs. Staff commented positively on this, which created a consistent approach across the team.

Policies and procedures were in place, which underpinned the service and staff practice. These were reviewed annually to follow best practice.

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, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were deployed effectively within the service, which ensured children were safe. The level of staffing met children's needs and supported the flow of the session. This promoted children's wellbeing and safety, as they were effectively supervised.

We observed a confident and knowledgeable staff team who were respectful of each other. Effective role modelling between staff developed children's understanding of positive relationships. This meant that staff had formed positive attachments with children and were able to meet their needs.

The staff team worked well together, which created a positive atmosphere where staff were courteous and respectful of one another. This provided a happy, safe and relaxed environment for children. Staff displayed warmth and kindness, which enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure. They recognised the importance of nurturing, warm and responsive attachments. Staff commented positively on the communication shared within the team. One parent commented that staff were, 'so lovely and approachable'. This demonstrated that parents felt respected and valued.

The staff knew the children and their families very well and worked to ensure every family was welcomed and valued. This contributed to creating a caring ethos, with a strong sense of community and family within the setting. Staff had regular communication with parents and had established positive relationships, which enhanced children's experiences and promoted a partnership approach. This positive communication with families, contributed to parents feeling included in their child's experiences at nursery, and assisted staff when identifying how best to meet children's needs. Staff spoke with pride about the positive attachments they had formed with families. This gave families confidence in the service and allowed children to feel relaxed and secure.

Professional development was a high priority for staff. Staff were encouraged to source specific training, which related to leadership roles, interests and areas to develop outcomes for children. For example, staff were proactive in accessing training and other professionals advice to meet the needs of children. This meant that staff skills and knowledge effectively met children's needs.

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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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