Denholm Playgroup
Day Care of Children

Denholm Primary School
West End
Denholm
Hawick
TD9 8LZ

Telephone: 01450 870 101

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 July 2022

Service provided by:
Denholm Playgroup Committee

Service provider number:
SP2003001995

Service no:
CS2003009267

About the service

Denholm Playgroup is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time between the ages of three and 12 years.

The playgroup is situated in a purpose built room within Denholm Primary School in the village of Denholm. There is direct access to the outdoor space and the service has use of the school playground and woodland area. It is close to local transport links, shops and community services.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 June 2022 between 08:45 and 15:00. 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 since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with children who attended the setting and four of their parents
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed staff practice
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children had quality play and learning experiences
- Staff provided nurturing and responsive care
- Children benefitted from daily outdoor opportunities
- The staff team were committed to continued professional development.

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?	5 - Very 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? 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.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and having fun in a warm and nurturing environment. Staff were responsive and skilled in building trusting relationships which contributed to children feeling valued and respected. One child told us "all the teachers are nice and they help me with anything." Parents told us they were happy with the care of their children and one commented "my child comes home happy and fulfilled and staff are open and communicative".

Personal plans held information to support and promote children's well-being, health and safety. These were reviewed with parents regularly which meant the information remained current and supported a continuity of care. Staff demonstrated that they knew the children well and had effective strategies in place. These included stepped approaches for medical conditions which supported individual children's care needs.

Children's emotional security and wellbeing was well supported by staff who used a nurturing approach to support transitions and offer comfort when needed. A 'wellbeing area' had been developed which provided a quiet cosy space with cushions 'wellbeing' teddies and books. Staff were sensitive to children's needs and offered physical comfort and stories. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure within their environment.

Children's independence and self-responsibility was supported through daily routines of the day. They helped prepare snack by shelling eggs, buttering toast and pouring their own drinking water. Staff sat with children and they chatted together in a social and relaxed atmosphere. We saw meaningful discussions facilitated by staff who promoted the importance of healthy lifestyles.

1.3 Play and learning

A range of play experiences were fun and engaging for children to lead their own play. They had opportunities to use their imagination and learn and develop through exploration, curiosity, and creativity. Staff were responsive to children's spontaneity and we saw children enjoying "working in an ice cream shop". A range of resources had been added to the "shop" including cooking utensils, natural resources and drawing materials. This helped to stimulate children's interests and extend their play and learning experiences.

Children's learning journals and floorbooks reflected their individual experiences and learning. They were easily accessible and children were keen to share their "red book" with us. Children's interests were captured and progress tracked through observations, photographs and artwork. Children showed pride in their achievements and enjoyed chatting and recalling events. These interactions helped build and develop children's self-esteem.

The planning 'in the moment' approach had been recently introduced. This supported children's interests in a spontaneous way and allowed them to make progress in areas that were relevant and of interest to

them. Staff told us that they felt this approach meant they could be more responsive to children's interests and ideas. We saw an example of this as children's interests prompted a "hooking ducks" activity. They chatted together sharing ideas and independently accessed a range of art materials and resources. We saw children confidently practicing their cutting skills and tearing tape from the dispenser. This helped to extend their physical and fine motor skills.

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The environment was warm and inviting and children were actively engaged with activities. There were cosy places for children to relax and space for children to play and have fun. The layout of the room and direct access to the garden meant children could move freely at their own pace and choose where they played.

Staff had focused on the environment as a key area within the service improvement plan. They told us they felt "proud" in what they had achieved and continued to make changes in response to children's interests. Areas had been carefully thought out and a range of lamps created soft and calm spaces for rest and relaxation. One parent commented "the room is filled with stimulating zones on different topics to engage the children".

Quality resources and well-equipped areas reflected children's interests in both indoor and outdoor spaces. These Included recycled goods, and natural materials which supported imagination and creativity. Staff had introduced a range of learning activities across the playroom to promote literacy and numeracy skills, one example we saw was at the 'dough station'. Recipe cards displayed printed text and pictorial steps to follow in making dough. Children were enthusiastic in counting and weighing ingredients from labelled glass jars, and scents and herbs added further interest to stimulate sensory awareness.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by regular opportunities to be outside. The outdoor space provided a range of stimulating activities, and access to the primary school playground and woodland area gave further opportunities for energetic and physical play. One parent told us the "outdoor area is fantastic". Children regularly accessed the local community for walks, shopping trips and chatting with the locals. This developed their understanding of their wider world and supported their wellbeing and sense of belonging.

The environment was clean and procedures and practice within the setting supported good infection prevention and control. Daily checks were carried out and risk assessments covered all areas within the setting in keeping children safe.

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 team had a positive working relationship and were committed to the improvement of the service. Staff told us they found the manager was very supportive and always available. One parent told us "the leader of the playgroup is a phenomenal woman."

Good communication with parents ensured they were included in their child's care. Methods used included direct conversations with parents, emails and social media. One parent told us "I would like to see inside the playgroup, hopefully it will happen soon". The manager told us that a transition period was being planned to support parents back into the setting after restrictions of covid-19 had been eased. This plan be shared with parents and would further facilitate partnership working.

The service improvement plan reflected their key priorities and was developed in partnership with the local authority. The areas of focus included establishing a high quality environment, implementing new planning and raising attainment in literacy. We saw the development of these priorities in practice through a range of opportunities and learning experiences. The visiting teacher gave support and guidance on improvement within the service with a focus on the environment through literacy and numeracy.

Quality assurance systems was in place that supported the monitoring and auditing of the service however we found that staff training and evaluation was not formally monitored . The manager should develop a system to track staff training and evaluation. This would consolidate learning, and monitor the impact of practice for the improvement of positive outcomes 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 worked well as a team and were motivated and committed to ensure continuity in children's care. They were flexible in their approach and good communication between staff meant that information was shared and used in practice.

Parents comments were positive about staff and included they were "approachable friendly flexible staff" and "the staff have been phenomenal".

The service had high staff to child ratios and all staff were fully qualified. The suitable mix of skills and experience of staff were utilised to provide good quality outcomes for children. Staff were responsive during interactions with children to extend play experiences and interests, however at times there were some missed opportunities to challenge children's learning. The manager told us supervision and mentoring systems was in place for less experienced staff to help build skills and knowledge and support their practice.

Staff were committed to their professional development and reflected together on how this could impact positively on outcomes for children. They engaged well with the inspection process taking on advice offered. Staff provided lots of warm, caring interactions and were respectful towards children's ideas.

The manager and staff recognised that continuity of care was important for children. Staff breaks were planned well to minimise disruption and to ensure appropriate levels of staffing such as during children's lunch time. The service had a member of the school cleaning team assigned to them daily after lunch. This

ensured effective cleaning and infection control measures were dealt with throughout the day. This meant staff were not taken away from their responsibilities and were available to engage to children.

Staff were deployed in a way that reflected the needs of children attending each day. They positioned themselves in the learning spaces both indoors and outdoors Throughout the day staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit children.

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

Staff should continue to develop children's learning books to include observations and next steps to support their health, wellbeing and development.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 4 - Engaging with children, Standard 5 - Quality of experience and Standard 6 - Support and development.

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2017.

Action taken since then
Learning books have been improved to include observations and next steps. On going training has been supported by the visiting teacher.

Previous area for improvement 2

The service should further develop children's curiosity and awareness of the outdoor world by making more use of the woodland area within the grounds.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 5 - Quality of experience.

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2017.

Action taken since then
The Playgroup regularly access the woodland area within the school grounds to support further learning. These experiences are evidenced within learning journals and floorbooks

Previous area for improvement 3

Written risk assessments should be put in place for outings within the community to ensure the safety of the children.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2 - A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 23 July 2017.

Action taken since then

The service had developed risk assessments to ensure children's safety when out in the community. They have reviewed all existing risk assessments in response to any changes made within the environment.

Previous area for improvement 4

The provider should ensure staff become familiar with, and attend training on 'Building the Ambition' and use their learning to embed this into practice within the setting

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2 - A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2017.

Action taken since then

Staff have attended 'Building the Ambition' training in line with one of the focus areas within the service improvement plan.

Previous area for improvement 5

It is a recommendation that the recording of children's activities in floorbooks should be written in a way that reflects what children have learned from the activity rather than simply describing it.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 4 - Engaging with Children.

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2017.

Action taken since then

Staff have developed a learning wall which transfers into a floorbook. Staff can track children's learning in a visual way of in identifying experiences and interests.

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

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