Honeypot Children's Nursery - Luncarty
Day Care of Children

Unit 6, Home Farm
Marshall Way
Luncarty
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Telephone: 01738 827 676

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 August 2023

Service provided by:
The Honeypot Children's Nursery Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003002169

Service no:
CS2003010120

About the service

Honeypot Children's Nursery - Luncarty, provides a daycare of children service in the village of Luncarty, within Perth and Kinross. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum 67 children at any one time.

Children are cared for within two buildings. Both buildings have an outdoor space and are close to local shops, parks and other amenities. The service is provided by a private provider who is in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council to provide funded places.

The service is one of two nurseries in the Honeypot group and is supported by an area manager.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 and 24 August 2023. The inspection was carried out by two 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:

- spoke with children using the service and we reviewed 13 questionnaires returned from their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

• Children were cared for by staff that knew them very well which nurtured their sense of security and confidence.

• Children and their families were welcomed back into the nursery which was having a positive impact on relationships and ensured effective information sharing.

• Chronologies had not been effectively completed to ensure that children were always safe and protected.

• Staff were skilled in supporting children through highly effective use of language and questioning strategies to further develop children's thinking and problem-solving skills.

• Children benefitted from exciting and interesting indoor environments. Resources and planned experiences across really engaged children.

• Staff's self-esteem and confidence was enhanced through leadership roles in developing specific areas within the nursery.

• While staffing levels met with minimum requirements, they were not always sufficient to meet the needs of all children.

• A key strength of the service was the children's involvement within their wider community and engagement with 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?	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? 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

Interactions between staff and children were warm and caring, children were happy, confident and comfortable in their surroundings. Younger children benefitted from supportive and gentle interactions. They were cuddled and comforted when upset and staff were responsive to their needs. Older children were having fun with staff who praised and encouraged them, we heard lots of laughter as they played together. It was evident that children had formed close and positive attachments with staff which resulted in them feeling loved, safe and secure.

Effective partnership working with families and other professionals to develop children's personal plans ensured they received the right care and support at the right time. Each child had a personal plan in place to identify their health and wellbeing needs. Staff knew the children very well and were responsive to their preferences and individual care routines. This resulted in children receiving consistency and continuity of care. Children that required additional support had strategies in place which enabled them to be fully involved in nursery routines and ensured they felt a sense of belonging.

Chronologies had not been effectively completed making it difficult to track significant events in children's lives and identify when additional support may be required. We discussed with the senior management team the benefits of documenting this information in a chronology. This will support staff to identify any potential risks to children and contribute to them getting the right support at the right time. We signposted the service to best practice guidance to support them with this (see area for improvement 1).

Older children were very well supported by staff during mealtimes. A wealth of opportunities promoted choice, responsibility and developed their independence. Staff enjoyed eating with children and used this opportunity to initiate meaningful conversations on healthy foods which promoted their language and social skills. Mealtimes were unhurried, sociable and a positive learning experience.

Babies enjoyed warm and nurturing interactions as they received support with feeding. Younger children experienced a mealtime that supported them to eat and drink at a pace that was right for them. However, they were not provided with opportunities for choice, responsibility or independence during their lunchtime experience. We suggested ways in which these opportunities could be introduced to support younger children in an age and stage appropriate way.

Allergies were well managed throughout the service and all staff we spoke with were confident on how to respond to a choking episode. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Children's rights were respected as personal care routines were carried out using sensitive and nurturing interactions for example, we observed staff smiling and talking to children warmly as they talked them through their routines which contributed to children feeling valued and respected.

Babies and younger children experienced peaceful and calm sleeping environments. Staff were skilled at picking up on children's cues when they were getting tired and sensitively transitioned them to sleep areas. Soothing music and darkened rooms enabled children to sleep well which contributed to them feeling valued and safe.

Children's medical needs were supported well by the safe storage and administration of medication.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Staff effectively considered how to incorporate language, literacy and numeracy into planned and spontaneous experiences within all indoor environments. A Play-Doh station was well accessed by older children, providing them with challenge and opportunities to measure, weigh and mix through a fun play experience. Staff were skilled in supporting children through highly effective use of language and questioning strategies. These enabled children to think and problem solve independently.

Additionally, with younger children staff used Makaton which was naturally woven into their daily experiences. Signs and symbols were shared regularly with families on a digital platform which encouraged family learning and promoted children's confidence in using sign language. There was scope to further enhance language, literacy and numeracy opportunities in all the outdoor play areas.

Older children's interests were reflected through a good balance between responsive and intentional planning. Detailed floor books evidenced older children's thoughts and ideas and planning approaches were centred around their ideas. This ensured staff provided experiences that were child centred and supported children to develop and progress. Younger children's planning was ambitious for their age and stage of development. We spoke to staff about how this could be simplified to ensure play experiences supported children to thrive and reach their full potential. Younger children's floor books were beginning to capture children's thoughts and staff told us they had recognised this and it was an area they were working on to further develop and improve.

Observations and next steps in learning were tracked well through an online digital platform. However, we found that they varied in quality and consistency across age groups. Older children's next steps were measurable and achievable and displayed in a child friendly format. Younger children's observations did not always capture learning and some identified next steps were not developmentally appropriate. We suggested next steps include strategies on how staff will support children to achieve. This would support children to be appropriately challenged in their learning and help children progress with achievable next steps. We suggested the manager use the online tracking and monitoring platform to quality assure children's observations and next steps in learning.

A key strength of the service was the children's involvement within their wider community and engagement with families. Children regularly visited a local care home, where meaningful activities supported positive relationships for example, residents of the care home, children and their families participated in a fun annual event 'Picnic in the park'. Parents visited the nursery and talked about their job roles. Older children took part in daily walks to a local woodland area. They were learning about sustainability, biodiversity, climate action, healthy living and how these subjects affected their lives. These opportunities promoted strong connections for the children within their own and wider communities. We suggested the service extend this learning to reach younger children in a developmentally appropriate way.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's care, welfare and development needs are always met and to enable staff to identify when children require additional support, the manager should at a minimum ensure: significant events in a child's life are recorded accurately and sequentially in a chronology.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children and families experienced welcoming, bright and well-ventilated facilities. Equipment and resources were very clean. They were well maintained and easily accessible to the children which provided them with choice. Children were cared for in two separate buildings, one for children aged three to five years and one for younger children. Both buildings had secure entrances and additional security at the top of all the playroom doors which contributed to keeping children safe.

Children were cared for in designated playrooms which provided them with ample space to play and were designed to support their age and stage of development. The playrooms were inviting, fun spaces to play and learn, with artwork respectfully displayed giving children a strong message that they matter.

Older children moved confidently around the large open plan playroom and made good use of the different play areas which reflected their current interests and curiosities. For most of their time, they had free flow access to the garden.

Younger children were offered a wealth of opportunities to participate in schematic and sensory play. Resources and planned experiences across the service were interesting and exciting and really engaged children. A very good provision of real-life experiences, loose parts and objects of interest inspired all children to be curious, imaginative and creative.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported as they all had free flow access to the outdoors for fresh air and exercise from the playrooms. On the first day of inspection the younger children's outdoor play area contained some plastic resources and children did not appear to be as engaged in their play as they could be. We discussed with staff how this could be improved. On our second visit staff had been responsive to our suggestions and we saw children were much more engaged in their outdoor play. They used toy diggers to move sand, scooped bubbles from water and transported them to the mud kitchen where they mixed them with natural materials. These experiences provided rich opportunities for investigation, curiosity and imaginary play.

Children were risk assessing their play and learning how to keep themselves safe for example, we accompanied a small group of children on a walk to a nearby woodland area. They were eager to show us how they had learned to cross the road safely. At intervals on the walk, they stopped to count how many children were in the group. One child told us, "We don't go far you know, when we shout, 'Timber', you will need to stop". Meaningful strategies put in place contributed to children keeping themselves and others safe when out in their wider community.

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 was a visible leader and met with staff regularly. Staff told us they were approachable and felt supported by their leadership. This enabled staff to feel confident to make suggestions for improvements and contributed to staff feeing valued and respected.

The vision, values and aims of the service had recently been reviewed and reflected the service provided. However, staff were not confident in the values or the aims of the service provided. On our second visit the staff had displayed the nursery values around the nursery. We suggested to the senior management team that children, their families and staff should be consulted each time a review is undertaken. This would promote a shared understanding and ensure stakeholders feel included in the service provided.

A realistic Improvement plan considered key planning priorities and a good start had been made to self-evaluation processes. Staff were involved and understood their role in the development of the service and improving children's experiences and outcomes. There were some opportunities for children and their families to be involved with the ongoing self-evaluation of improvement priorities. We suggested other ways in which the senior management team could gather informative information from the children and their families. This would help support the manager to access progress with developments and contribute to sense of shared purpose and vision.

The manager had made a good start to quality assurance processes. Due to staff absence, they had recently been covering in playrooms which had impacted on the time they had allocated to complete their cycle of monitoring for example, having undertaken focused observations of staff practice, they had not always provided staff with clear feedback with identified actions. We suggested the manager always share her findings with staff, to support them to reflect on their practice. This would help ensure aspects of quality care and support is not overlooked and support improvements to be effectively and consistently made. We directed the manager to the Care Inspectorate's Hub and the bitesize session on Quality Improvement to assist with this.

Staff's self-esteem and confidence was enhanced through leadership roles in developing specific areas within the nursery. These included: eco schools accreditation, word aware strategies, outdoor and forest school and intergenerational links with a local care home. They confidently told us of positive changes these roles had made in providing better outcomes for children. Staff asked us questions about their roles, which demonstrated a passion and commitment in providing positive experiences to help children reach their full potential.

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 were confident about providing quality play and learning for children. They were friendly, warm and responsive to children's requests and needs. Peer monitoring of their practice supported them to reflect and further develop their practice. Staff told us of improvements made through monitoring which had enhanced children's experiences and increased staff skills and confidence. They worked and communicated well together and supported each other effectively which resulted in a strong team.

Staff were effectively deployed across the setting to take account of their professional knowledge and skills. They were respectful of each other and morale was high. Staff had a good understanding of current guidance and how they used this to enhance children's experiences and told us how they shared their learning their colleagues. We found them to be passionate and committed to improving outcomes for children.

They had established very good relationships with children and their families which supported children to flourish and feel safe in the service. Parents comments included, "The staff are extremely caring and have a real understanding of the children in their care" and "The staff are all lovely! They really care about the children, and I feel my child is in safe hands at Honeypot".

While staffing levels met with minimum requirements, they were not always sufficient to meet the needs of all children. On the first day of our visit, staff breaks at lunchtime could have been planned better to ensure minimal disruption to children's routines for example, staff were task orientated during the younger children's lunch experience and older children were not able to access their outdoor space straight after their lunch. We suggested that staff review when they take their lunchbreaks. Staff were responsive to our suggestions and on our second visit staff were deployed in a way that supported children's experiences and choices.

The manager should have sufficient time to effectively manage the care service provided. Senior staff were covering long term absence during our visits and the manager told us she would often cover unplanned absence. This system had the potential to not always afford them the time to complete their senior management roles and responsibilities. We asked management to review the roles and responsibilities of senior staff and consider the time allocated for these roles. This would result in senior staff being given the appropriate time to fulfil their management responsibilities.

Newer staff were inducted meaningfully into the service with a well thought out programme of reflection. They told us they felt part of the team and fully supported within their roles which enabled them to feel included as part of the existing team. We discussed with management the importance of ensuring three-monthly reviews were being undertaken in a timely manner as aligned with the induction policy and procedure. This will help new staff to regularly reflect on their practice and continue to feel informed on what is expected of them.

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?	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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