Port William Playgroup
Day Care of Children

c/o Port William Primary School
Port William
Newton Stewart
DG8 9JX

Telephone: 07776 093 555

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 May 2024

Service provided by:
Port William Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003002775

Service no:
CS2003011781

About the service

Port William Playgroup is registered provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children aged between 3 years and those not yet attending primary school. The care service will operate between the times of: Monday to Friday 08:50 - 15.10. School terms only. During the operating times the service will have exclusive use of: The playroom and adjoining annexe.

The playgroup is located in the village of Port William, within Dumfries and Galloway. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities. Children are accommodated in two playrooms, and an enclosed outdoor garden. The nursery also access other spaces within the local primary school building and playgrounds.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8th and 9th May 2024. The inspection was carried out by one 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 people using the service and one of their family on the committee
- Gathered feedback from 12 families through online questionnaires
- Spoke with three staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were happy and settled at the playgroup.
- Children experienced warm and responsive care from staff which supported their health and wellbeing.
- Children experienced mealtimes that were relaxed and sociable.
- Children's wellbeing was supported through regular opportunities to play outdoors.
- The manager, in partnership with staff and children, should continue to develop the indoor play spaces.
- The manager, in partnership with staff, should continue to develop quality assurance and tracking processes to support sustained improvements in the service.

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?	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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

On both days of inspection, staff were warm, welcoming, and kind to children. There was a strong ethos of community within the team, and staff recognised the value of fostering positive relationships with children and their families. Parents told us "Staff are friendly and caring towards my child."

Children were supported sensitively throughout the day. Staff were attentive and noticed when children required additional support to join in or share toys, prompting them gently. This helped children build their independence and develop social skills.

Children experienced snack and mealtimes that were relaxed, unhurried and sociable. Snack helpers set up the tables with staff, which promoted their independence and enabled children to develop their life skills. Children and staff enjoyed chatting and eating together which enriched the mealtime experience. Staff offered support, prompting and praise to children. Children were able to self-select and self-serve aspects of their meals which further developed their independence and self-help skills. Food choices were nutritious and in line with current guidance. Water was available to ensure children remained hydrated over their day.

Staff knew children in the playgroup very well. One parent told us "staff know my child well and cater for their needs." They could tell us about their individual personalities. Care plans were in place for each child and contained relevant information on their likes, dislikes, and routines important to them. Children and families were included in creating and reviewing care plans regularly. Staff spoke to children about what they wanted to learn, noting interests and preferences. Next steps were highlighted and reviewed with families and any changes were recorded to ensure staff had the most up to date information. We suggested the team add the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators to the care plan review sheets.

We reviewed medication and found the policy and storage was in line with current good practice guidance. Consent forms were completed and plans reviewed monthly with families. However, we asked health plans to be expanded to give clearer details for staff when administering emergency medication.

Children's wellbeing was protected by a clear and concise safeguarding policy. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They had recently attended child protection training and knew how to address any concerns appropriately.

1.3 Play and learning

We evaluated this quality indicator as good as several strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were able to lead their play and learning during their time at playgroup. Over the inspection we observed children freely engaging in opportunities such as block play, jigsaws, Lego, and lots of outdoor play. Staff were responsive to children's initiations and invitations to play and supported children to continue to grow their ideas. For exampling helping children to build an obstacle course outdoors.

One parent told us their child "has a variety of types of play daily".

Children were beginning to benefit from a balance of planned and spontaneous activities. Language, literacy, and numeracy experiences were evident in the playroom. Children engaged in activities such as stories and singing. We saw activities set up to support mark making and numeracy each day. Children were offered activities which focused on developing fine motor skills. Environmental prints in the area further supported children's language and communication.

The nursery had a real ethos of community. The team planned activities to support children to make connections with their community which supported their belonging in the local area. This was achieved through walks, trips to library and dance classes. Visits to the local shops, cafes, parks, and local farms.

Observations and tracking of children's individual achievements were very clear and effective. The team used learning journals to create a story through observations, which started with the child's initial next steps, then followed their journey and progression through a variety of activities offered. Consolidation of children's learning was then audited to highlight gaps in play and learning experiences in the playgroup. This ensured children engaged with a wide range of play and learning experiences that supported their development and growth.

We discussed the planning cycle with the manager on the days of inspection. The newly formed team had begun creating their approach to planning in the playgroup which would incorporate individual next steps, intentional and responsive planning, instead of focusing on weekly topics. Staff met weekly to review the activities on offer. However, we asked the team to consider how they could further develop their recording of planning and evaluating children's learning outcomes. The manager agreed to link with peers to create a process that fully embeds the planning cycle.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

We evaluated this key question as good as several strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children experienced an environment that was comfortable, clean, and welcoming. The room had natural light and was ventilated with open windows and doors. There was ample space indoors and outdoors for children to play and explore together or alone if they chose to do so. Some cosy spaces were available for children to relax in the playroom. However, we asked the team to continue to develop homely spaces by adding more soft furnishings and low lighting. This will support children to rest, relax and regulate over their day at playgroup.

Children benefitted from direct access to an enclosed, outdoor area for play. The team, in partnership, with children and families, had developed the outdoor area by upgrading the space, refreshing the resources, and adding new elements to children's play such as music, literacy and numeracy. On both days of inspection children were having fun and engaged in lots of play such as chalk painting, balancing on boards, making an obstacle course, making mud cakes in the outdoor kitchen, and reading stories. Children could access loose parts play and natural open-ended materials in the outdoor space. One parent told us "They have just updated the outdoor area which looks great."

Children were confident moving around the rooms and outdoors. This showed us children felt safe and secure in the nursery. Indoors children played with Lego, read books, engaged in imaginative play in the home corner and painted pictures in the craft area. However, we discussed the indoor environment and have asked the team to audit the layout of the rooms and children's engagement to ensure they can extend their own play in a rich, stimulating environment. We asked the team to expand the natural open-ended materials in the indoor space.

Children had daily opportunities to play in a natural environment. Direct access to the enclosed garden from the playroom, as well as grounds in the wider school offered children stimulating and interesting outdoor environments throughout the day. Children learned about seasons, wild animals, bugs, and insects and were enabled to take risk in their play. They also benefitted from real life experiences as they grew vegetables and flowers. One parent told us "My child enjoys playing outside and gets the opportunity to do so often"

Children had access to the wider school. This included weekly visits to the PE hall, visits to the lunch hall and playground during the transition to primary one. Children regularly played in the wider school field, which gave opportunities for them to socialise with older children. This helped promote a variety of social and learning experiences for children.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place in line with current guidelines and best practice guidance. Children and staff were confident in hand washing procedures. Personal Protective Equipment was available when required. Cleaning schedules were in place. This supported children and staff's health and wellbeing in the setting.

Risk assessments were in place for all areas and activities within the setting. Mitigation measures were well considered and realistic.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

We evaluated this key question as good as several strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The team had been through a period of significant change over the past year with a new manager, staff turnover and new staff members starting. The team engaged well with the inspection process. They were open and transparent in their engagement.

Aspirations for the service were shared by all team members, the manager and supported by the parents committee which showed us the service had a good capacity for change. The newly formed team were committed to providing children with high quality early learning and childcare at the playgroup. Staff and the chairperson of the committee spoke passionately about the value and importance of their community and getting it right for the children and their families.

Families told us they felt comfortable and confident to approach the team to discuss any issues, ideas, and suggestions. The team had focused on increasing parental engagement for the service in line with this year's improvement plans. We could see stay and play sessions had been introduced. Parents were encouraged to join the nursery for events, to tell stories to the children and get involved in helping develop the garden area.

The parent committee were actively involved at influencing the service provisions and creating the improvement plans for the service which provided another meaningful way for parents to help the service grow and develop.

Children were at the heart of any changes and improvements in the nursery. The team met weekly to discuss what was working well and share new ideas. The newly formed team had introduced self-reflection and self-evaluation at regular team meetings. They should continue to embed and sustain this process by considering the key questions; what we are doing, how do we know and what are we going to do now. Staff we spoke to told us they felt involved in the improvement process and their ideas were valued and respected. This supported a positive working ethos within the setting.

The manager and committee, in partnership with staff, should continue to develop effective quality assurance processes which will support sustained improvements in the service. For example: establishing and embedding the planning cycle to support children's learning. Auditing the environment and accidents. Organising staff files following recruitment.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

4.3 Staff deployment

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

Staff were deployed effectively throughout the indoor playrooms and enclosed outdoor garden which supported high levels of interactions and promoted the wellbeing and safety of children. Key worker systems were in place to support continuity of care for children and their families. Staff had protected time to complete paperwork and observations on children in their key worker groups. This supported effective tracking of children's learning and development.

Staff were fluid in their deployment by following children's lead between the indoors and outdoors. As well as during busier times of the day such as mealtimes, drop off and pick up times. This ensured children's needs were fully supported. Additional relief staff were arranged on busier days to support lunchtimes to ensure children's routines and transitions were not interrupted. It also allowed staff to have a break and recharge over their working day.

Staff told us they used each other's strengths and individual passions to enrich children's play and learning experiences. We observed this throughout our inspection and when reviewing floor books. Parents told us staff were "Friendly", "trustworthy", "easy to talk to",

Staff communicated effectively with each other throughout the days of inspection. They were respectful in their engagement which supported a positive ethos within the service. Staff engaged in regular team meetings which supported self-reflection and group evaluations of the service provisions. Opportunities to meet as a team will support the service to continue to grow and develop. Ensuring positive outcomes for children accessing the play group.

Staff engaged in annual appraisals which were completed by the manager and chairperson from the committee. Strengths and areas for development were openly discussed with appropriate training and support offered to individual team members. Staff were all registered with the appropriate regulatory body, the Scottish Social Service Council. We asked the manager to add yearly auditing of registration onto their quality assurance calendar.

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	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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