Jigsaw Family Learning Centre
Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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Service provided by:
North Lanarkshire Council

Service provider number:
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CS2003015333

About the service

Jigsaw Family Learning Centre is registered to provide care for 80 children not yet attending primary school. Of those, no more than 10 are aged two years to under three years.

Care is provided from a single storey property located in Muirhead, North Lanarkshire. The centre is based within a wing of St. Barbara's Primary School close to parks, shops and other local amenities.

Children were cared for in three bright playrooms. Children also had access to a cycle/physical room, lunch room and secure gardens.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 April 2024. We provided feedback to the service on Wednesday 17 April 2024. 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
- reviewed feedback from 19 parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and caring interactions which helped them to feel nurtured and valued.
- Children's personal plans should be further developed to ensure they clearly reflect children's individual interest, choices and wishes.
- The service worked collaboratively with professionals who were involved in children's care and support.
- Some areas of the nursery environment would benefit from more robust maintenance.
- Further development of natural resources could enrich children's play experiences.
- Management had a vision for the service and clear plans for improvement.
- Children benefitted from a staff team with a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience.

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?	5 - Very 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

Children attending the setting were happy, settled and confident in the environment. Staff supported them with kind and caring interactions, helping them feel loved, safe and secure. Parent told us "staff are always very welcoming" and "staff are friendly and approachable."

Staff knew the care and support needs of individual children well and were responsive to their physical and emotional needs. This helped to promote their self-esteem, confidence and independence. Staff interactions were unhurried, calm and responsive to children's needs. Parents told us "staff are very understanding of individual children's needs" and "[my child] is well looked after and [their] personal and social needs are met."

Personal plans were in place for all children. We discussed with the service how these should be further developed to ensure relevant information was recorded to support the individual wellbeing of all children, as well as respecting their wishes and choices. For example, 'All about me' information that details individual preferences, interests and other significant information about children's individual needs should be recorded. Some parents told us they were involved in creating personal plans, however not all parents agreed. Parents told us "I'm not sure what is on my child's personal plan" and "the first target was set and carried out but was not discussed with us." The service should continue to identify and implement approaches to ensure parents are included in their child's learning and development.

Children with additional support needs had detailed personal plans that supported their progression and development within the service. Some plans contained clear strategies to support and enhance children's learning. However, consistency in this approach was needed as not all plans had the same level of detail. The service shared they are currently reviewing their personal plan format and agreed with needed changes. To ensure a consistent approach to documenting children's needs and how these were met in line with current legislation and guidance, we have asked the service to develop and monitor robust recording methods to support individual needs. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Effective links had been established with external agencies helping to contribute to children's care and support. This included regular engagement with speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and health visitors, which ensured continuity in children's learning and development. External agencies agreed that staff were committed and supported children's needs, and were eager to identify approaches to reduce barriers to ensure they are getting it right for children. They told us "they really want to get the best for children."

Children mostly benefitted from relaxed mealtime experiences. Children within the 3-5 room could choose to have snack when they were ready to, which supported their independence and choice. Snack time was an opportunity for children and staff to sit and talk together, which promoted their language development. However, at lunchtimes we found staff to be task orientated at times, which minimised the opportunity for children to develop social skills and engage in unhurried interactions.

The service shared their plans to further develop lunchtime experiences to offer opportunities for children to come together in smaller sittings. We agreed this would help support positive mealtime experiences.

Medication was stored appropriately and easily accessible. The service had detailed individual risk assessments for children and completed monthly reviews of medication. We discussed some small changes to medication during the inspection which the service actioned immediately.

Children were safe and protected from harm with clear policies and procedures in place relating to child protection. Staff clearly understood the role they played in this and had all undertaken annual child protection training. The head of centre acted as the child protection officer, ensuring a robust system was in place. Therefore, we were confident that any child protection matters would be responded to appropriately.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were engaged and settled in play experiences, where they could choose from a variety of toys and materials. For example, arts and craft, water play, playdough and outdoor play. Children told us "I like playing with the wee houses and people" and "I like the playdough."

Staff provided a mixture of spontaneous and planned experiences to support children's learning through play. The pace of the day was mostly relaxed and supported children to have long periods of uninterrupted play. This enabled children to make choices, explore and move freely between indoor and outdoor spaces, supporting their overall development. However consideration should be given to reviewing the period before and after the lunchtime routine to further enhance experiences offered, ensuring they are responsive to children's needs and interests.

Within the Additional Support Needs room (ASN) and 2-3 room, boardmaker was used to support children in making choices. Boardmaker is a tool used to support communication. However, further consideration should be given to how children can lead and make choices about where they want to play. For example, making choices of playing outdoors or visiting the sensory room.

Staff played alongside children, interacting positively with them and supporting their learning and extending their knowledge. For example, the use of questions whilst drawing flowers helped support children's awareness of the world around them. Staff adapted sensory experiences within the younger playroom, to support the individual needs of children. This supported children's natural curiosity.

Play experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. For example, children were using descriptive language to describe the different textures of playdough. Parents told us "my child has grown in confidence and independence since starting Jigsaw" and "children always seem to be at the centre of their learning."

Planning was at an early stage with a new approach recently introduced. This new approach would help ensure children's voice was valued and responsive play was at the heart of their approach. We acknowledged more time was needed to refine and embed this new approach into practice to support children's learning and development.

Children's opportunities to play and learning where enhanced through connections to the community. The service made good use of local space using the parks, cafes and mobile library. Children told us "I like going on trips to the park" and "we went to the café and had milk and cookies."

Areas for improvement

1. To support children wellbeing and development the service should enhance personal plans to ensure they contain relevant information to meet the needs of children. This should include but is not limited to ensuring 'all about me information' is fully complete and up-to-date.

This is to ensure that care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards (HSCS) which states: '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 15).

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 were cared for across separate playrooms, specific to their age and needs. Playrooms were decorated in neutral colours which helped create a calm and inviting space for children. Large windows ensured playrooms were filled with natural light. The service benefitted from additional playrooms to support children's learning and development, these included a play on pedal's room and a separate sensory room. One parent told us "my child always has access to different types of play, creative physical and imaginative."

Careful consideration had been given to the layout of the rooms to offer a range of spaces for children to make choices, support their interests and develop their ideas. Staff has created spaces for children to play together or be on their own to helping to support their choices and emotional development. Children told us "I like nursery because its fun, I can see my friend and play" and "I like to chill in the book corner."

The service had recently completed environment audits, to develop an enabling environment for children. The service should continue in this approach to further develop areas. This would help ensure children have a rich, curious, enabling environment to support their learning and development. For example, adding more real resources within house corner and developing the sand area outdoors. Management should also review the play environment within 2-3 and ASN room to ensure they offer children an environment that supports their individual needs. This includes developing further sensory experiences and ensuring resources are accessible to support children's choice.

Health and wellbeing was promoted through outdoor play experiences. The 3-5 garden provided a range of spaces for development of physical skills and exploration. Opportunities for risky play were provided where children assessed their own risks. For example, balancing on tyres. Children made good use of this and were confident when using all areas of the outdoor space. Children told us "I love playing in the garden" and "we get to climb up high on the climbing frame."

However, consideration should be given to how younger learners can explore their outdoor play space safely and confidently, including opportunities to explore a natural play space independently. For example, ensuring spaces are tidy and welcoming for children to access and developed spaces that support children's stimulation, creativity and imagination.

At the time of inspection the forest school area was not being used due to drainage. Staff and parents shared that this had not been accessed for a year. One parent told us "[my child] has really missed the forest play as it's been closed for months. [They] ask everyday is it fixed." The provider should review this with a means to ensuring children can participate in forest school experience to further support children's natural curiosity and play opportunities.

Children benefitted from a safe and secure setting with a range of safety measures in place to ensure children did not come to harm. This included secure entry systems, clear boundary fencing, secure gates as well as regular headcounts and communication between staff.

There was a system in place to monitor the maintenance and repair of equipment. However, during the inspection we identified some areas where further repairs would be beneficial. For example, broken radiator covers, repairs to floors and general maintenance of the building. We discussed the importance of children experiencing a clean, safe and well-maintained environment. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection, supporting a safe environment for children. Effective handwashing took place regularly. Nappy changing areas were clean with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), nappies and other materials being stored appropriately.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure that children receive care in a clean, well looked after and well-maintained premises. This should include, but is not limited to, repairs to damaged flooring and improving the quality of fixtures.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard's (HSCS) That states: "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment." (HSCS 5.24)

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.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Management and staff team all worked together to ensure a positive ethos within the setting. The shared vision, values and aims of the service were evident in the kind and nurturing ethos we observed throughout our visit. Parents told us "staff are very supportive and understanding" and "I cannot fault the service, staff are fantastic and always happy, available to chat, help and support the full family."

Leaders were passionate and committed to their role to help ensure positive outcomes for children. Staff members that responded to our questionnaire told us they were confident that the setting was well managed.

Comments included "having a new head of centre and a new depute has been a real period of change for the better" and "management are a good support, always available when you need to ask questions."

Quality assurance processes were in place which included a clear improvement plan with realistic targets to support additional support needs provision, literacy and the development of a quality assurance calendar within the service. There was a shared responsibility for improvement as the whole staff team were involved in the ongoing monitoring of aspects of provision. This meant staff understood the role they played in supporting improvements to children's care, play and learning. One staff member told us "we are making positive steps towards our improvement plan with a team focused ethos including the voices of all."

Regular opportunities were provided for management and staff to engage in professional dialogue. Personal Development Reviews (PDR'S) supported the development of staff skills and knowledge, whilst also ensuring each staff member could contribute towards improvement. Staff confidently spoke of best practice documents used to promote positive outcomes for children. For example, Realising the Ambition, as well as some training which helped to support and enhance their understanding. The service should continue to provide opportunities for staff to reflect and discuss best practice to support the continuous development of the service.

The views of children and families were sought to support the development of the service. This helped to ensure children and families benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. Suggestions were acted upon by a "you said we did response." This supported parents and carers to feel their opinion really mattered.

A programme of training was in place that ensured staff were supported to develop as practitioners. Staff were involved in initiating well informed changes by being part of leadership groups. Staff spoke enthusiastically about how training had influenced their practice and implemented positive experiences for children. For example, Do be mindful training, Solihull training and Autism training. The service could further develop their approaches by recording staff's reflections on training and how it has impacted on creating positive experiences 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

Children were cared for by a staff team who were caring, nurturing and committed to providing a positive experience for children. They were warm and friendly in their approach which promoted a happy and inclusive environment for children. Parents told us "the staff know children so well. Their needs are met and activities are tailored to meet there individual needs" and "my child has a great rapport with staff. I feel that [they] are well looked after and [their] personal and social needs are met."

Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. This helped to create a nurturing environment for children and their families. Consideration had been given to the differing skills and experiences of staff. This provided opportunities for good role modelling and mentoring of less experienced staff to ensure positive outcomes for children.

The service operated a keyworker system, which promoted continuity of care across the day. This supported positive transitions for children and good communication for parents. However, some parents shared that they felt the beginning of the day discussions were rushed or parents were unable to provide updates due to not being able to speak to their child's keyworker. Consideration should be given to how staff are deployed at this time of day, to ensure meaningful discussions with parents, this includes the sharing of daily information.

Overall, staff deployment was effective to meet the needs of children. Staff worked closely with each other to ensure children's individual care needs were met. They communicated well with each other when a task took them away from their responsibilities. This helped to ensure effective supervision and engagement. However, staff deployment should be reviewed during key transitions to ensure children's choice in play. For example, children's choice in play after lunchtime was limited.

Staff told us they felt supported by the leadership team. Regular communication enabled staff to feel included and valued in the development of the service. There was a focus on staff health and wellbeing which meant staff felt supported in their roles. Staff told us "from a personal perspective, management have always been supportive of me and have done their best to take care of my emotional wellbeing. I feel like I can speak to my leaders when needed and they will support me in whatever way they can" and "management go above and beyond to ensure that wellbeing needs are recognised and supported."

New staff had benefitted from an induction and were using 'The National Induction Resource' to reflect on their learning and evaluate their practice. Regular one-to-one meetings supported staff to reach their full potential. This contributed to a positive staff ethos, further supporting children to be settled and happy.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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