Community Playgroups (Crofthead Hickory House)
Day Care of Children

Crofthead Centre
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 May 2025

Service provided by:
Community Playgroups SCIO

Service provider number:
SP2012011983

Service no:
CS2015338834

About the service

Community Playgroups (Crofthead Hickory House) is currently registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 25 children aged from 2 years to an age to attend primary school.

The service is provided from a community centre where the playgroup have sole use of two main playrooms with direct access to an enclosed garden space. One of the rooms has a food preparation area which has a gate to ensure that it is only accessible by staff. Children access the playgroup through the secure reception space which has a cloakroom area and toilets, which children have supervised access to.

The service operates during the school term time only and children can attend for morning sessions from 09:15 until 11:30 Monday to Friday or full day sessions from 09:15 until 15:30 Monday to Thursday. The playgroup is a partner provider with West Lothian Council and offers funded hours for eligible two's, three's and four's.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8 May 2025 between 09:00 and 15:00. Feedback was given to the team on Friday 9 May 2025. The inspection was carried out by one 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.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with twelve children using the service and gathered feedback from nine of their families
- spoke with five staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were developing and learning new skills through the play opportunities provided at the playgroup.
- Children had positive relationships with the staff team who knew them as individuals and supported them to have fun and engage in a variety of indoor and outdoor play experiences.
- Parents told us they were very happy with the care and support provided by the staff.
- The staff and managers had developed their quality assurance processes to support them to further improve the service provided.

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?	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? 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

Staff supported children throughout their time at playgroup with warm, kind, caring interactions helping children to feel safe. Staff were respecting children's views about how their personal care was supported in the service. Personal care was also supported with privacy and dignity.

All children had personal plans which supported staff to know them as individuals. The information helped to keep children safe, meet their health and personal needs and detailed strategies of support. For example, how to support children settling into the service. This could be further developed to gather more information to support children with English as a second language in the service. Support plans were reviewed with families regularly. This helped to ensure that parents were involved in shaping the care given and provided consistency of care.

Where children had medical needs staff were aware of individual needs. This ensured that they got the help they needed at the right time. Information was reviewed regularly helping to keep it accurate and keep children safe.

Children were given praise and encouragement and supported to make choices about where they wanted to play. Staff celebrated successes in play and social skills, for example sharing and being kind as well as achieving new skills like blowing bubbles successfully. Families told us their children enjoyed their time at the service and that they and their children had positive relationships with the staff. One commented: "Our child appears to enjoy the range of activities on offer and has developed positive relationships with the staff."

Rolling snacks were healthy and children were supported to be independent in serving and tidying up after snack. Children were choosing to eat lunch as a group and so staff listened to their preferences. The meals were healthy, well-presented and enjoyed by the children. Staff sat with children, supervising and role modelling and supporting children to be independent. This helped mealtimes to be pleasant sociable times. Staff told us they planned to further develop children's independence. Staff could also further develop the practice towards the end of lunchtime to ensure this continues to be a positive, calm time.

When children were tired staff picked up on cues and offered sleeps. These were well managed by staff who monitored sleepers regularly, as they slept in a protected space in the end room. If children didn't want to sleep, they were offered a cuddle and this helped them to rest and reset.

Staff were confident in their role in protecting children from harm.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children enjoyed a rich variety of developmentally appropriate experiences. Children could choose to play in or outdoors throughout the sessions helping them to lead their own learning. The small garden was well organised to give a variety of experiences and was a favourite during our visits. Staff reflected on this and

ensured that there were literacy and numeracy resources throughout the setting helping children to learn new skills, for example counting, timing and measuring.

Staff took time to play with children and chat with them listening to their responses and building play experiences around their interests. For example, one child was very interested in the life cycle of butterflies. Staff had ordered some caterpillars so that the children could care for them and watch them hatch into butterflies. Planning showed that children's voices were central to the way play was designed in the service helping children to lead their own learning.

Children enjoyed opportunities to play one to one with staff and we saw staff using questioning to support learning and curiosity. Children enjoyed choosing songs from a bag and this was requested regularly. Staff used this to give children some time inside when the UV was high as most children wanted to join in. When children showed an interest in books, staff supported their interest, sitting in cosy spaces, helping to develop their vocabulary and a love of books.

Children's need for sensory experiences were supported in and outdoors through core provision like sand, playdough and water and additional resources in line with their current interests.

There were opportunities for children to explore, be creative and problem solve for example, using loose parts and areas like the mud kitchen which were very popular. Staff planned these areas with developmentally appropriate resources to help children learn new skills. Improvement plans showed that staff planned to develop the resources to ensure that these continue to present a challenge for older or more capable children.

Children had opportunities to play for long periods uninterrupted alone or in small groups, which helped them to practice and learn new skills at their own pace.

Records showed that children had opportunities to visit resources in the local community, for example feeding the chickens at the local community garden. This helped them to develop a respect for their local community and nature.

The improvement plan showed that staff planned to further develop how they tracked children's development in the service. They planned to identify any gaps in children's development and offer targeted support to build skills and bridge any gaps. For example, fine motor or communication skills. Consideration could be given to further developing the processes for evaluating if they have achieved their goals.

Families were kept informed of children's progress and achievements through daily chats and information in the online app. Staff highlighted that they planned to develop this to make it more frequent for all children. Parent's told us that they were happy with the feedback they get about their child "We are updated on our child's progress at playgroup in relation to their targets and staff discuss proposed new targets with us."

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 setting was well resourced, tidy, clean, comfortable and homely helping children feel that they mattered. There was good ventilation and daylight in rooms, which made the space pleasant to be in. Displays in the setting celebrated children's creative work helping children feel respected. Other displays built links to their home lives helping them to feel a connection between their home and the setting.

Resources were stored to allow children to choose independently and lead their own play and learning. Children enjoyed being able to move between indoor and outdoor activities freely, the butchers curtains helped to keep the indoor space cool in summer and warmer in the winter. The risk benefit approach to using the outdoor space meant that staff supervised the garden space closely, reducing the risks associated with the low perimeter fence. Staff should continue to monitor this and ensure that they revisit the risk planning for example to ensure that items which would be easy to climb are not stored against the fence throughout the session. The staff had identified getting a higher fence to reduce the risk further, however, funds were not yet secured.

Families dropped children off and picked them up from the reception space in the setting. Consideration should be given to supporting more access for families to the play space in ways which support children's wellbeing and safety, to help families feel welcome in the service. This would help families feel more welcome and able to give feedback about the service.

Staff carried out appropriate infection prevention and control measures for mealtimes and personal care helping to keep children safe. Children were supported to wash their hands before and after mealtimes and we saw that they also enjoyed accessing the outdoor sink when hands got messy outside. The bins had been replaced with pedal operated bins in the play space which children confidently used helping to prevent the spread of infection. Staff cleaned the rooms regularly and reset areas throughout the day, helping to keep the play spaces tidy and inviting.

The toilet and nappy changing space had been redecorated and refurbished fully addressing the area for improvement made at a previous inspection. The toilet and nappy changing areas were clean and well organised to give personal care which was respectful and maintained children's privacy and dignity.

Daily checklists were completed by staff to ensure that the play spaces were in good condition and safe. Any maintenance issues had been documented and shared with the management team, who had taken action to address them.

Children's information was stored securely in the service and staff had good systems in place to ensure that healthcare needs were easily accessible and stored confidentially. This helped to keep children safe.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service policies and procedures were shared with families helping them to feel informed about what they should expect from the service. The service made good use of their online app to share developments in the service for families who weren't always present at the service each day for handovers. Stay and play events helped families to see children engaging in play in the service. Children enjoyed sharing the floor books which shared how they and their families were consulted about the service and how their feedback

was used to develop it. All the families who gave us feedback, told us that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. One commented: "(We are) asked for feedback at times, asked for ideas for new resources to buy for the children."

The staff team were involved in evaluating the service. They had regular opportunities for professional discussions, supporting them to develop the care and experiences offered and their knowledge and practice. Staff told us they found regular team and one to one meetings supportive. Staff were supported to identify areas of development and to access training opportunities which helped them develop new skills and knowledge.

The monitoring systems had identified actions for development. For example, that mealtimes could be further developed and we saw how staff were moving forward with this. Staff shared different things which had been tried to improve children's experiences and how they had evaluated and reset when things were not working for their children. Recording these trials would support effective evaluation and continued improvement.

The service had a calendar of monitoring which supported them to review and improve practice across the children's experiences. For example, the monthly audit of children's personal plans supported them to identify any gaps and areas to develop. The service should continue to develop this to ensure that improvements are clearly identified and include how they plan to measure the impact of changes so they can measure progress.

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.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children felt safe in the service as they were supported by the staff in a calm and nurturing way. The children invited staff into their play and had lots of fun because of the staff skills and values. Staff knew when to support children and when to stand back and allow them to problem solve themselves. This was empowering the children and building their skills and confidence.

The service had enough staff available for the children they were caring for throughout our visits. Breaks were well planned for to ensure that staff could take them helping them to feel respected. Breaks were scheduled well helping to ensure that they didn't have an impact on the quality of care provided.

Staff were deployed well in the service. This included having designated roles, for example, supporting mealtimes or leading in the outdoor space. This was organised in a way to ensure that children's needs were met and supported them to freely access different areas to play throughout the session. There was always a member of staff available to meet care needs. This was supporting children to be successful in toilet learning. Children's individual preferences were supported for example, having a key member of staff to help them settle effectively into the service. The delegated responsibilities for tasks supported consistency across the day. For example, staff supporting mealtimes prompted children who would benefit from more hydration or food, helping to keep them healthy.

At busier times of the day staff were communicating effectively with each other to ensure that care was safe and positive. For example, closing room two when children were not using it to allow staff to focus on

interactions with children rather than 'policing' spaces . Consideration could be given to these key times of day as part of new monitoring processes to ensure that any improvements can be identified to further support the practice across the day.

Students were well supervised in the space with staff role modelling expected standards well.

Support from the organisation meant that staff absences were not impacting on the quality of care being provided. The staff team worked well together ensuring that children's experiences were positive.

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

To ensure children's safety and wellbeing the provider should take action to comply with their conditions of registration. This is to ensure that nappy changing is provided in line with current best practice guidance to prevent the spread of infection.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23) and 'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed' (HSCS 5.4).

This area for improvement was made on 21 June 2024.

Action taken since then

The children's toilets had been freshly decorated and looked brighter and more welcoming. The service had installed new toilet roll holders and a privacy screen to support children's privacy and dignity if they had to use the nappy changing unit in the toilet space. The accessible toilet space was no longer used for adults, to prevent the spread of infection, when using the nappy changing unit in the space. Both spaces had appropriate handwashing sinks, were clean and well organised to provide personal care in line with current best practice guidance.

This area for improvement is met.

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?	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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