Ardvreck Nursery
Day Care of Children

Ardvreck School
Gwydyr Road
Crieff
PH7 4EX

Telephone: 01764 653 112

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 August 2022

Service provided by:
Ardvreck School Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003003589

Service no:
CS2016344652

About the service

Ardvreck Nursery operates from a bungalow within the grounds of Ardvreck School, an independent preparatory school, on the outskirts of the town of Crieff. The service is registered to provide care for 30 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school.

Care is provided from the bungalow which has direct access to an enclosed garden area. The children also benefit from Forest School sessions held within the extensive grounds and woodlands at Ardvreck School.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 22 August 2022 between 09:30 and 17:30. 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, 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
- received ten responses to our online questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

• Children experienced warm, nurturing care to support their well-being
• Children experienced a sociable meal time, the service should now develop this experience to promote independence and self help skills
• Children were empowered through effective questioning to problem solve
• Forest School sessions supported children to develop their understanding of nature, explore, and be curious, contributing to children being confident and happy in their play.
• An ethos of continuous improvement was evident throughout the setting
• Parents and families had not been meaningfully consulted to inform improvement
• Staff were deployed in a way that meant there was a good mix of skills and experience across the nursery.

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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

1.1 Nurturing care and Support

Children attending the service were happy, settled and having fun. They experienced warm, nurturing care to support their well-being. Staff were respectful towards children, taking time to listen and respond. They sensitively supported children to be independent and problem solve. Staff knew children very well and interacted positively with them to support their needs. This helped children feel secure.

Children experienced an unhurried and sociable lunch time. Staff joined children at lunch, promoting meaningful conversations. This contributed to the sociable experience for children and allowed an opportunity for emerging language skills to be developed. There were some missed opportunities for choice and independence at lunch time. We discussed with the management team how this could be improved to allow children increased opportunities for self-service. This could improve children's independence skills and provide an element of choice at lunchtime. Throughout the day fresh water was available to children.

Effective use of personal planning meant that children's current needs were identified and supported. The service had worked with families to ensure information gathered was relevant and up to date. This resulted in staff who knew children very well and contributed to partnership working between families and the service.

Families had opportunities to be part of the service and participate in a variety of experiences, for example parents were invited to plant trees and also be part of the schools overnight camp. This contributed to families feeling included as part of the whole school.

1.3 Play and learning

Children's play and learning was supported well during the inspection. We observed staff to be responsive to children's requests in their play and intervene at a time that was appropriate for the child. This contributed to children feeling valued and having the ability to lead their own learning by following their interests. Staff used effective questioning to extend and develop children's individual learning and empowered children to problem solve. This resulted in children who were independent and confident to manage situations within their nursery experience.

The free flow nature of the play space meant that children could choose where to play which supported children's choice and independence in leading their play. Resources provided reflected children's current interest and learning. However, children did not consistently receive choice in their play experiences. We observed the afternoon session to be more adult directed and task orientated. This resulted in children's play being interrupted.

Children's learning and progress was recorded and shared with parents via an online platform. We noted that some observations were descriptive and did not effectively capture relevant next steps in learning. The service had identified the need to continue to develop the consistency of observations. We discussed how they could improve the recording of observations with a clearer focus on children's play, learning and development. Some parents commented that information via the online platform was infrequent and did not contain information personal to their child. We highlighted this to the service who agreed to make this a priority.

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 quality key question as very good.

2.2 children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced forest school sessions within the grounds of the school which provided a wealth of play and learning experiences. Opportunities for children to develop their understanding of nature, explore, be curious and problem solve contributed to children being confident and happy in their play. Children were engaged in their play on the day of inspection. Play opportunities supported children's curiosity, enquiry, and creativity. Children freely accessed toys and resources to extend their play. This contributed to them developing a sense of ownership and respect for their environment.

All children enjoyed free flow access between the indoor and outdoor area which enabled them to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. Outdoors there was a variety of play experiences which children engaged with. For example, making potions in the mud kitchen and investigating items that sink.

There were opportunities for children to access soft furnishings and cosy spaces to support their wellbeing. In the Forest School area, hammocks provided a space where children could rest and relax should they wish. These spaces supported children to relax, self-regulate, and feel safe.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to minimise the potential spread of infection. We observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing. The building was well ventilated.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The nursery had a shared vision, values and aims that informed practice. This contributed to the effective team work observed on the day of inspection.

Quality assurance and an ethos of continuous improvement were evident throughout the setting, with the management team and staff working hard to develop children's experiences. A quality assurance calendar was in place that ensured audits of various aspects of the nursery were routinely carried out.

Families had not yet been involved in a meaningful way to inform change. The manager had been in post for six months and recognised this as an area for improvement. The service should now consider reviewing processes to consult with parents. This will support the service to identify future priorities in collaboration with children and families.

Staff were involved in the self-evaluation process. This supported staff to be reflective in their practice and make changes to improve outcomes for children.

A centre improvement plan had been developed which had identified areas for development and allowed for progress to be monitored. We discussed with the management team ways in which priorities could be more streamlined and take into account areas for development identified within the report. For example, ensuring quality play experiences consistently throughout the day and developing parental participation in a meaningful way.

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we had confidence that the nursery had the capacity to continue their improvement journey. The management team and staff should continue to embed systems in place to ensure they are robust and allow for a steady pace of change and sustained improvements, ensuring improved outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

4.3 Staff deployment

There were sufficient staff in place to ensure children were effectively supported throughout their session. Staff were deployed in a way that meant there was a good mix of skills and experience across the nursery. They communicated well and in a respectful manner to ensure children's needs were met. This contributed to children being respected and created a positive team ethos within the service.

Children benefited from arrangements in place to promote continuity of care and support positive transitions. For example, children were effectively supported during the lunch period. We discussed with the management team how this should be reviewed to ensure there are ample staff available to improve communication with parents at the end of the session.

The staff team had experienced some changes since the last inspection, and they were beginning to work well as a team. The manager had a focus on staff relationships and growing the positive ethos within the service. Procedures were in place to maximise staff attendance and staff told us they felt supported, respected, and valued.

The manager had a clear focus on developing staff skills and practice to improve outcomes for children. This included protected time to come together to enhance self-evaluation of practice to improve outcomes for children.

We received feedback from parents about the staff team. A few parents told us communication could be improved. We discussed this with the management team to support improvement within the service. Overall, the feedback was positive, and comments included: 'Very happy - well-structured day, good amount of independent play time, (Child) confidence is growing" and "overall I am extremely happy with the nursery".

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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