Castlegate Childcare
Day Care of Children

Old Squash Court Building
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Uddingston
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Telephone: 01698 810 081

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 August 2023

Service provided by:
JT Childcare Limited

Service provider number:
SP2018013058

Service no:
CS2018363849

About the service

Castlegate Childcare is registered to provide care to a maximum of 67 children of whom a maximum of 9 children may be aged 0 - 2 years of age, a maximum of 18 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school. The out of school care may care for a maximum of 40 children enrolled in primary school up to 14 years of age.

Care is provided from a two storey property located within the town of Uddingston, South Lanarkshire. Children are accommodated within four playrooms and have access to outdoor spaces. The service is close to shops, schools, transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 31 July and 1 August 2023. Feedback was provided on 2 August 2023. 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 five people using the service and 27 families
- spoke with 10 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- reviewed contact with visiting professionals.

Key messages

Children were safe, loved and secure in their attachments with staff at the service.

Since the last inspection the manager and staff had worked hard to begin making improvements relating to free flow play, mealtimes, planning and play experiences that used open ended materials and loose parts.

Children benefitted from the all-day access to indoor and outdoor play. This was supporting an active and healthy lifestyle.

Some cleaning procedures needed to be more robust to promote a safe environment for children and families.

Strong and trusting relationships with families were embedded and helping to improve outcomes for children.

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?	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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy, engaged and settled. Staff had adopted warm, caring and nurturing approaches. They knew children well and were responsive to their needs. Children told us "I like it here and everyone is nice to me" and "I love being here, me and my sibling both play here." Staff told us "All practitioners within the nursery have strong relationships with children and know their care routines and learning developments."

Overall personal planning was supporting children's wellbeing. Information gathered about children's needs, interests and life experiences helped staff to provide care in an individual manner. Significant needs and interests were identified and set out within personal plans supporting most children to reach their full potential.

Trusting relationships with families were established at drop off and collection times. Parents had the opportunity to enter playrooms during this time and this was helping with the sharing of information that supported meeting needs. The service was transitioning from paper-based information sharing to the use of an online app. Parents welcomed the convenience and accessibility of this. However, some said they felt they would benefit from "More pictures and understanding what development milestones they are working on" and that they would like to see "A little more focus on app updates." We agreed that continuing to streamline systems would further enhance effective communication.

Transitions were planned well and promoted children's sense of security and belonging. Individual plans were put in place to ensure children were settled when they joined the service or when they moved rooms. For example, this involved gathering important information from families and offering one-to-one support to help meet children's needs.

Children were able to rest and sleep according to their individual needs. This responsive approach helped to meet their needs and promoted good sleep routines. Rest and sleep times were calm and cosy promoting a restful experience and supported wellbeing and development.

Children's individual needs were supported through sensitive and informed practices. External agencies had been involved with the service, such as educational psychology and community nursing to provide strategies and guidance on supporting individual needs. This was welcomed by staff and parents. Staff knew individual children well are were able to respond and engage with children helping improve outcomes.

The manager and staff had worked hard to develop the lunchtime experience for children since the last inspection and this was having a positive impact on children's experiences. Staff interacted warmly with children and supported them to develop life skills, such as pouring their own drink and self-selecting food. Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried and used as an opportunity to connect as part of a social experience. Children has access to water throughout the day and were encouraged to remain hydrated supporting their health.

Food menus took account of good practice guidance and children were enjoying their meals. However, parents told us they would like "More variety with the lunch menu, ideally rotating it so the same meals weren't always on the same days of the week" and "Different food." We were satisfied that routine meals were healthy, filling and nutritional. However, we suggested the manager reflect on this and consider reviewing the menu rotation to support a wider variety for children.

Children's dietary, allergy and medical needs were well understood by staff. Effective systems supported this and where needed staff told us external professionals provided guidance and support. Medication was given in a safe manner; this was recorded in line with good practice guidance supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Staff understood their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They had undertaken child protection training and were aware of potential indicators of abuse and what action to take to keep children safe.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were involved in leading some play. They participated in play that was fun, challenging, stimulating and relevant to their stage of development. Parents told us children were having positive experiences saying there was a "Nice balance of down time having just finished a busy day at school as well as having opportunities to participate in activities that are more structured" and "Staff listen when I advise things from home my child is interested in" and another said staff were "Caring and want to teach, help and create a fun environment for children."

Staff told us of the ongoing focus to develop the play environment as part of their improvement planning. Some areas were resourced with natural open-ended materials that encouraged children to be curious and build a sense of wonder about their world. Staff had participated in training about observations and communication and used this knowledge to support children to develop their play and learning. Materials, such as a well-resourced science area, large block play and sensory objects challenged children's thinking and encouraged experimentation.

Experiences such as art and crafts, reading stories and writing with feather quills dipped in paint were helping to support children's early literacy. Attending Bookbug sessions at the local library and the use of visuals and environmental print were supporting children to develop confidence, language and feelings of being understood.

Children of all ages were able to access both indoors and outdoors throughout the day in all weathers. This helped them to stay active and healthy and developed children's opportunities for independence and risky play. Older children attending out of school care made very regular visits to parks and country parks within the local and wider community.

Parent and children welcomed the benefits of this access to outdoor learning telling us "The children go on the best adventures during the holidays, getting outdoors and exploring new places whatever the weather" and a child said, "We go to parks in the two buses." Children were becoming resilient and building social skills.

The manager and staff told us that planning approaches were an ongoing area of development. They were becoming more child centred and responsive to children's interests, life experiences and development needs. This had helped to make sure that children were engaged with play and learning experiences.

Staff should continue developing their approach to planning which will enable better tracking of children's progress in learning.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was spacious and airy. The staff had developed a homely environment using soft furnishings and materials to create a welcoming space where children felt secure. The manager told us they had plans to freshen some décor in the service in the coming months. There were displays of children's art creations and photographs of their experiences and outings. This gave a clear message to children that they mattered and belonged.

Indoor playrooms took account of children's interests and stage of development. Toys and materials were easily accessible for children. A focus of improvement for the service was the introduction of loose parts and open-ended materials that were supporting children to make choices about their play and lead their own learning.

The manager told us they were committed to building loose parts and open-ended materials on an ongoing basis. We agreed that this would be beneficial to create a more challenging play space. Staff also agreed and told us they had "Worked on different ways to continue to improve our indoor and outdoor setting to suit all the children and their interests" and a parent agreed telling us that their children "Have always been happy going to nursery. They are nurtured and in a safe environment."

The outdoor areas had been a focus as part of the service improvement plan for 2022/23. As part of our observations and discussions with the manager we saw children were now able to access free flow play to the outdoor area throughout the day. Staff had worked to bring a balanced approach of child led, spontaneous and planned experiences to life in these areas using strategies such as visual prompts, tuft tray experiences and by developing areas of curiosity, interests and provocations to spark learning. Children were as a result engaged, leading some learning and busy having fun in their play.

Some safety measures protected children from harm. These included maintenance issues being addressed in a timely manner and a secure entry system. Risk assessments and room checks were in place and reviewed regularly. As part of a discussion with the manager about the importance of safety we were satisfied that action had been taken to address a few issues, such as loose hanging wires before the inspection concluded.

Some infection control practices prevented the spread of infection. For example, handwashing was embedded for staff and children and areas within playrooms were kept clean and well-organised. However, more robust cleaning procedures were needed to promote a safe environment for children and families. For example, thorough cleaning of nappy changing areas, bathrooms and the organisation of storage and general deep cleaning of the premises. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children are protected from harm, the manager and provider should make sure that children receive care in a safe and clean environment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'my environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19) and '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? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager promoted a shared vision that supported staff to understand the needs of children and families. Staff were motivated and committed to working together to improve outcomes for children. Parents were happy with the leadership of the service and told us they were "Impressed by the leadership and parental engagement" and felt the "Manager is always very visible and approachable."

Parents said the staff team were "Approachable at all times and child centred." Staff were beginning to be more involved in improvement plan focus areas for the service and some staff had begun to lead on areas of new learning such as forest schools training and outdoor play. This provided staff opportunities to build on their skills and knowledge and created positive experiences for children and families.

Staff had regular opportunities to meet with the manager and received constructive feedback about their work. This was delivered sensitively with children's needs the focus of improvement conversations. Reflective tools including, staff observations helped staff to identify development needs.

The manager knew the importance of self-evaluation to support the delivery of positive care and a quality service. Reflections on staff training had led to changes in practice that improved children's experiences. For example, the development of risky play, improvement planning and observations.

Children and families' views were actively sought to support future plans and developments of the service. Communication methods such as feedback requests, online pages and apps and in person discussions were used to share information about proposed changes and provided opportunities to comment. The nursery app was a recent introduction and a focus area for the service to ensure it was used as fully as possible to share information that supported meeting children's needs. We agreed this would further support effective communication with families.

Some quality assurance processes had contributed to positive outcomes for children. For example, improvements to children's routine and mealtime experiences, playroom environment and a focus on improving quality assurance systems. Parents told us "Any issues are dealt with promptly and professionally." The manager was committed to their role and had embraced new learning on improvement planning starting with small tests of change to ensure improvements were long lasting and meaningful. Overall, action was taken to address any gaps in practice, however we discussed with the manager and they agreed that ongoing monitoring was needed across all areas.

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.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were warm, approachable and caring. Working well together they had created a welcoming environment for children and families. Parents complimented the team telling us "How friendly all the staff are, how they all take time to get to know the needs of your child", "Staff are incredibly attentive with a real nurturing focus" and "My child actively looks forward to the few days they attend."

The service was appropriately staffed to provide care to children. Staff were deployed flexibly to ensure that children were supervised. They worked well as a team to communicate often about children's individual needs. Information was shared with staff regularly and in person team training sessions were supporting a shared vision for the service.

Staff told us they appreciated the "Support and help from management team, as there has always been an open-door policy" and they felt they had an "Approachable and supportive manager." This provided consistency for children and families. Regular management support helped staff feel valued, motivated and committed to their role.

New staff were well supported to settle into their role. They had time to get to know children and families. Staff told us the induction process helped them reflect on practice and develop a deeper understanding of their role in relation to children's individual care needs.

A keyworker system was used to help children to foster attachment and feel emotionally secure. Parents and carers knew the staff caring for their children. This was reassuring for families and they told us they felt the overall service and staff team was "Friendly with approachable staff who build relationships with the parents as well as the children which helps give confidence your child is being looked after in a nurturing way."

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

The service should review the snack and lunchtime menu. This should contain choice and be nutritionally balanced. This is a list of suggested improved practices; it is not exhaustive.

- A selection of different utensils to choose from for example small and big spoons when eating soup.
- Staff eating with children
- Napkins to be offered
- Softer environment, for example music and a change to table
- Children to be more independent and make choice
- Children to be included in the preparation and clearing away of lunch equipment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables and participate in menu planning.' (HSCS 1.33) 'My human rights are protected and promoted and I experience no discrimination.' (HSCS 1.2)

This area for improvement was made on 15 April 2022.

Action taken since then

The service had a lunch menu that was nutritionally balanced and the manager had recently requested feedback from parents to help make further improvements to the variety of food available.

- Children had access to suitable utensils for eating and serving.
- Staff were eating with children.
- There was a dedicated space for mealtimes and children experienced calm and unhurried mealtimes.
- Children had opportunities to build independence, life skills in serving, pouring cutting and clearing.

This area for improvement was addressed.

Previous area for improvement 2

All resources and equipment should be fit for purpose, to promote investigation and natural curiosity, risk versus benefit, open ended play and staff should be prepared to provide the resources in all areas.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 5: I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises. 5.22 I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.

This area for improvement was made on 15 April 2022.

Action taken since then

An effective maintenance log was now place and being used. This recorded areas for action and repair. This was a detailed log for each room and actions had been recorded by the manager of the service on an ongoing basis.

As a result of management and staff team reflection of playrooms and resources all children had more open-ended play opportunities with space to explore loose parts play, investigate sensory activities and undertake physical and energetic play.

This area for improvement was addressed.

Previous area for improvement 3

The service should ensure there are more robust monitoring systems in place to contribute towards improved outcomes for children. This is to support children's care, support, health and wellbeing and the improvement focus within the service.

This includes:
- playroom monitoring
- children's experiences, both indoors and outdoors
- monitoring of key environment areas and resources
- monitoring of children's learning journals
- monitoring of children's planning and success criteria

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19)

This area for improvement was made on 15 April 2022.

Action taken since then

The manager was committed to quality assurance and improvements at the service. Since the last inspection they had worked to develop some more robust monitoring systems that were contributing towards improved outcomes for children. These were supporting children's care, health and wellbeing and an improvement focus within the service.

This included:

- playroom monitoring
- children's experiences, both indoors and outdoors
- monitoring of key environment areas and resources
- monitoring of children's learning journals
- monitoring of children's planning and success criteria.

This area for improvement was addressed.

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?	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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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