Mini Macs Nursery
Day Care of Children

Macbi
Community Hub
Newlands Road, Mintlaw
PETERHEAD
AB42 5GP

Telephone: 01771 624593

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 April 2023

Service provided by:
Mintlaw and Central Buchan Initiative
a Company Limited by Guarantee

Service provider number:
SP2021000003

Service no:
CS2021000005

About the service

Mini Macs nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children at any one time, aged from two years to an age to attend primary school, of whom no more than 15 may be under three years of age.

The service is based within the Macbi Community Hub in the village of Mintlaw. The setting consists of a large playroom and an enclosed outdoor area. Children also have access to gym facilities within the community hub.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 April 2023 between 09:30 and 17:30 and 14 April 2023 between 08:30 and 12:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, and information submitted by the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- spoke with eight of their parents/carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children and their families benefitted from a welcoming and inclusive ethos.
- Staff interactions were positive, kind, and caring.
- Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning.
- There was a wide range of high-quality resources, offering children opportunities for challenge, creativity, and problem-solving.
- The service was well led and quality assurance, including self evaluation and improvement plans, were in place to support continuous improvement of 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?	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.

1.1. Nurturing care and support

Children and their families were warmly welcomed by peers and staff. They experienced warm, caring, and nurturing interactions. For example, staff comforted and reassured a child who was reluctant to leave their family member, giving cuddles, eye contact, and smiles. This helped to build positive and trusting relationships.

Parents were kept informed through discussions at drop-off and pick-up times, emails, and the Family App. This supported working together and a continuity of care. One parent demonstrated how the Family App helped keep them informed and reassured them that their child was well looked after.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Plans included detailed individualised information on children's needs and how these would be met. Families were included in developing and reviewing these to ensure information was current and relevant. Staff had a very good knowledge of children's plans, which aided them in providing tailored care and support for children. Children who required additional support received effective care which contributed to their progress and ensured they were included in experiences and play.

A proactive staff team sought advice from professionals and welcomed multi-agency working to ensure children received the right care and support, resulting in positive outcomes. This included effective partnership working with parents to establish shared strategies, which contributed to a continuity of care for children. For example, one parent told us about the positive impact this approach had on their family; "We have similar things at home to nursery, the support has been really amazing".

Children were provided with appetising and nutritious meals and snacks. Staff were observed sitting with children promoting conversation. This enabled opportunities for language development and ensured children were supported well and were kept safe when eating. Children's life skills were supported during mealtimes as they served their own food, tidied away their plates once finished, and could independently collect their dessert as they were ready. This promoted a calm, unhurried experience. We encouraged the service to continue to review mealtime organisation and discussed how children's independence at mealtimes could be further enhanced. For example, by setting up tables and preparing food. Children's allergies and food preferences were very well catered for and alternatives were offered, where required. Water was readily available during the day to help keep children hydrated and well.

Children's safety, emotional security, and wellbeing were supported through sensitive arrangements for rest and relaxation throughout the day. Staff supported children in the story corner as they enjoyed stories and relaxed on the sofa and floor. Children benefitted from a 'home from home' ethos.

Children's wellbeing and safety was promoted by staff's understanding of their role in identifying, recording, and reporting any concerns. Chronologies were used effectively to record significant events in a child's life. Staff and management showed a good understanding of factors which may impact on a child's wellbeing. This meant children and their families were provided with the help and support they needed.

Appropriate storage and systems were in place for medication being administered safely to meet children's needs. Information was collated and displayed which ensured staff were knowledgeable about children's health needs and to know the signs, symptoms, and actions to take where a child may require medication.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were well supported to achieve and progress. A balance of responsive and intentional planning was used to respond to children's interests. Observations of the children at play helped identify and develop next steps to support children's learning and progression. A focus on real life experiences, schematic play, and individual planning for children with additional support needs ensured children experienced meaningful learning.

Children were happy and engaged in their play as they confidently explored the high-quality experiences on offer. One child told us: "I love running around and jumping in muddy puddles". Children were engaged in sustained play experiences as they chopped vegetables in the home corner making 'soup and casserole' and explored the many sensory opportunities on offer. Children benefitted from free-flow, indoor-outdoor play opportunities throughout the session. This allowed them to choose where they wanted to play and explore as they led their own learning.

Children were supported by staff who were skilled in responding to their needs. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of when to step back, allowing children to investigate and explore freely, and when to intervene. This helped keep children safe and supported their resilience as independent learners.

Opportunities for emerging language, literacy, and numeracy skills were promoted across the nursery. For example, counting, sorting, and matching were encouraged as children selected and tidied away their mark making resources. Children enjoyed reading stories and singing rhymes with staff in an engaging way when children showed an interest in doing so.

Staff showed an understanding of children's development and an ability to provide quality play and learning experiences. Activities, such as dough making, were used to provide opportunities to raise awareness of numeracy. Staff used effective questioning to encourage children to estimate and predict and were able to pick up on children's cues to extend their experiences. This contributed to interested and excited children and supported children's learning and engagement.

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.

Children experienced a setting that was secure, clean, and welcoming which supported their safety and wellbeing. Homely touches, such as soft furnishings and decoration, promoted a sense of calm and provided nurturing spaces for children to explore and learn. The layout of spaces had been well considered and thought out to meet children's needs and ensure they could explore and learn comfortably.

Risk assessments were in place for the environment and resources. These identified possible hazards and how to reduce the level of risk. Children were encouraged to participate in assessing and discussion in keeping safe. This supported their understanding of how to manage risk.

Children benefitted from opportunities to play outside. Open-ended, natural materials supported children to explore, jump, and balance whilst completing an obstacle course. This allowed them to challenge themselves in a fun way. Opportunities to develop imagination, curiosity, and creativity were observed as children played in the mud kitchen and whilst digging in the soil and bark areas. The service had identified the outdoor environment as an area for improvement. Children, parent, and staff views had been taken on board to support future development.

Areas indoors were well furnished and resourced with a range of real-life objects and photos making links to children's lived experiences. Children experienced exciting and stimulating play spaces. For example, the construction area offered a wide range of easily accessible blocks, props, and loose parts. These resources offered choice, challenge, and opportunities to develop creativity and problem-solving.

Children's health was promoted by staff's understanding of infection prevention and control. The service was clean, tidy, and well maintained. Handwashing was well supported at appropriate times throughout the day and tables were cleaned before and after mealtimes.

Staff were clear on their responsibilities and children were supported to care for their resources and surroundings. This promoted children and staff ownership and pride in their nursery environment.

Children's privacy was protected by the safe storage of their information, including paper and electronic files.

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.

Ongoing consultation with staff and parents meant the vision, values, and aims of the service reflected the aspirations of children, staff, and families. The aims and values included ensuring "children are at the heart of everything and should be valued, listened to, and empowered to be the best they can be". This was clearly reflected in practice and evident in the high-quality care for children.

The manager and staff recognised the importance of consultation with the children and their families to support improvement to the service. Parents commented positively on the use of the Family App to keep them informed and included in the life of the service. Daily chats, emails, questionnaires, and online platforms provided effective communication and opportunities for families to comment and make suggestions. This led to positive relationships and a culture of working together to promote good outcomes for children.

Self evaluation and quality assurance processes were embedded in practice. The manager had been crucial in creating an environment where everyone felt valued and enthused to provide the best care possible. Staff spoke positively about their involvement in using self evaluation to support continuous improvement and make positive changes. This informed an improvement plan identifying some areas for development, such as improving the outdoor environment.

Regular monitoring of staff practice promoted high-quality interactions and consistent care and support for children. A regular audit of medication stored on the premises and of incidents and accidents highlighted any areas of concern and helped keep children safe and well.

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.

Children were supported by enthusiastic, committed, and motivated staff. Positive attachments between staff and children were evident and feedback we received highlighted families felt staff were approachable and were always available for discussion. One parent shared: "They spend a lot of time really listening to you. I feel as though I can easily get in touch when I need to".

Children were cared for by staff with a range of skills, experience, and knowledge. A supportive induction process for new members of staff helped them grow in confidence and become competent in their role. Staff understood the benefits of training in furthering outcomes for children and were motivated and keen to further their development. They reflected well on past training, in areas such as learning and assessment, which could be seen clearly in the high-quality observations recorded in the children's learning journals. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of safeguarding children and in infection prevention and control procedures to help keep children safe and well.

Children and their families benefitted from a consistent staff team. This helped children develop positive attachments with staff who knew their interests and personalities well. Skilled interactions supported high-quality learning outcomes throughout the day. Staff were flexible and communicated well to support each other to work as a team to benefit children. Staffing arrangements promoted continuity of care across the day and well managed rotas and staff breaks ensured that tasks and routines did not impact negatively on children's care.

A blend of skills, knowledge, and experience in the staff team contributed to positive interactions and play experiences for children. This created an enthusiasm for supporting children to reach their full potential. Staff were able to talk confidently about children's next steps and their role in supporting these. Parents felt they had good relationships with their child's keyworker and the wider staff team. Clear processes to mentor and support all staff using the skills and knowledge of the existing staff team were in place. Staff discussions highlighted high staff morale and this clearly impacted on the overall ethos of the setting and the children's high-quality experience.

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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