Chapter One Childcare Dalkeith
Day Care of Children

The Country Park Nursery
Dalkeith Country Park
Dalkeith
EH22 2NA

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 October 2021

Service provided by:
Chapter One Childcare (UK) Limited

Service provider number:
SP2021000083

Service no:
CS2021000136

About the service

Chapter One Childcare Dalkeith is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 75 children not yet attending primary school at any one time: of those 75 children no more than 21 are aged under two years.

The nursery is set in the grounds of Dalkeith Country Park. The building consists of six playrooms, outdoor play areas and a welcoming entrance area. There are toilets and changing areas for children and a parents room.

Aims and objectives of the service include:-
Value all children as individuals, taking into consideration cultures and special needs.
Demonstrate a caring a considerate attitude towards the children, promoting their self-esteem.
Encourage children to practice and acquire skills.
To continually review and update our curriculum ensuring that the needs of each child are met, thereby assisting children to achieve their maximum potential.
Observe, monitor and evaluate children's progress and development
Work with parents as partners in their child's learning and to share with them their child's achievements.
To ensure that training needs of all our staff are assessed and met by providing regular supervision, performance reviews and providing training opportunities.
Improve our service through self-evaluation

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. We visited the service on 16 September 2021 when we spoke to children, staff and management team. We reviewed relevant documentation during the inspection and further information and documentation was requested from the management team and was sent to us by e-mail. We asked the manager to distribute an email from us to parents using the service asking for their views. We provided feedback to the management team and representative from the local authority on 25 October 2021 using Microsoft Teams.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality of Care and Support.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children, by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included.

What people told us

We spoke to several children and observed all children during our visit. This provided us with a good insight into their play experiences both indoors and outdoors. Most children were confident, happy and were having fun during our visit.

Sixteen families shared feedback with us about the service. Parents told us that effective information around Covid-19 had taken place. Parents commented that staff were welcoming and caring towards the children and the nursery was nurturing. Children were able to take part in a wide range of activities both indoors and out. Some parents commented on the number of staff changes and the lack of walks within the country

park. Some also commented on the lack of observations on their children in the learning journals especially for older children.

Comments from parents included;

"With my child being so young I feel the setting gives him a loving and social environment to be with his peers and interact with other adults. I feel the setting is the perfect place for my son to grow and develop. I feel the setting and staff is brilliant, I never have to worry about how my child is throughout the day as I feel like I'm dropping him off with people who love and care for him as much as family do".

"Importantly, I feel that all the staff at Chapter One care about my children and genuinely want them to enjoy their time at Nursery. I appreciate how hard each of them work every day too. Especially over the past year, management sorting out the logistics of staffing and trying their utmost to keep the nursery open when they could.
Staff coming to work everyday and perhaps risking their own health to do so is very much appreciated. In this highly unusual year they have worked to give my children a sense of normality and for this we are sincerely grateful".

"Both my children absolutely love the nursery. They seem to get a nice balance of organised activities/ learning as well as free play. My youngest was a lockdown baby so we were naturally anxious about him starting nursery but he settled even quicker than our eldest. It's so nice seeing photos of him engaging in all the activities".

"I can't rate the nursery and management highly enough, and recommend them to others. I wish my children could stay for longer! They don't just care for the children, they educate (in a fun way!). They encourage good behaviours. They learn so much at nursery, about academic subjects such as numeracy and literacy as tailored to the child, and how to socialise, treat others and they promote independence. They cover useful topics in a fun way (hygiene during times of covid or if there has been a vomiting bug in nursery, recycling, nature, history, cultures etc). My son went to school well-prepared thanks to nursery".

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of this inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were happy, settled and confident in the service. They were encouraged to be independent and received appropriate support, in a respectful way, when they needed it. We found that staff were consistently caring towards children and more established staff knew them well. Babies and younger children were responded to with warmth and nurturing interactions. These positive relationships helped children to feel safe and secure.

Parents were informed about their child's day through various means including face to face dialogue, social media and learning journals. Parents welcomed the staff involvement in supporting their child's development. However, some parents commented on the limited amount of observations of their children, especially for older children. We have asked the management team to monitor the quality and number of observations of all children. This would ensure that children's learning was being supported and challenged appropriately.

Staff knew the children's individual needs well and personal plans were in place for each child. However, some children's plan's lacked recorded information which would help staff provide clear and consistent support. We have asked the management team to ensure these support plans are accessible to staff, regularly reviewed and audited to ensure they are effective. Plans should be shared with parents. This will help staff when planning daily experiences to promote the children's learning and wellbeing.

Mealtimes across the nursery were a pleasant experience. Children enjoyed their lunch in an unhurried atmosphere. Fresh fruit and vegetables were offered at snack time which promoted healthy food choices. Some staff sat with the children and ate lunch with them while offering
support and encouragement when required. However, some staff were too focused on tasks during this time and some younger children would benefit from more support. The manager should build monitoring of the lunch time experience into her quality assurance systems. This would further support children to receive a nurturing and enriching mealtime experience.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures to support a safe environment. For example, most staff wore face coverings at appropriate times and observed physical distancing recommendations. The management team should monitor and review Covid-19 procedures appropriately to ensure safe practice is maintained.

Children were safe and protected due to staff having a good understanding of what to do if they had a concern about any child's care or wellbeing. Most staff were confident in the procedure to follow if they had any concerns regarding the safety of the children. To deepen staff's knowledge safeguarding scenarios should be discussed at team meetings. Staff may also benefit from further training around ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and the importance of nurture, especially at this time when children's emotional and mental wellbeing may have been significantly impacted upon by Covid-19.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Overall, the nursery environment was bright, clean and welcoming for children. There was a calm and nurturing ethos which helped children and families feel respected and included. Artwork celebrated children's achievements and helped them feel valued.

Children were busy and most were engaged in playing with the the toys and resources on offer. Older children were confident, and having fun using the resources and experiences available. Children's independence and choice was promoted as staff had begun to include more natural and open-ended resources. To further support children's learning, curiosity and imagination resources should be evaluated to make sure they are varied and inviting to children. Staff should look at national guidance including "Realising the Ambition" and begin to evaluate the quality of children's experiences, interactions, and spaces and to view these from the child's perspective. Staff should begin to develop their knowledge around schematic play as this would ensure staff have the skills to provide a rich play environment which meets children's developmental needs. Attention should also be paid to the literacy and numeracy resources on offer. This would ensure children are provided with a range of toys that promote challenge and depth to their play.

Most children benefitted from use of the outdoor area to promote their physical skills. Older children showed familiarity and confidence in the environment and were benefiting from some new resources that had been purchased. However, the outdoor area for the younger children lacked interest. The resources available did not encourage exploration or challenge to the children. Staff should ensure that outdoor resources and activities are set up to encourage children to explore, develop their skills and take risks.

Some younger children had not been outside at all during the inspection because they found it difficult to access the outdoor environment. We also observed that the outdoor area for the younger children lacked interest and staff told us plans were in place to develop the garden area. In the meantime, staff should ensure children access the outdoor environment daily and this should be monitored by the management team.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Staff were kind and caring towards children and considerate of their wellbeing, they showed commitment to developing their skills. The management team acknowledged that careful planning will now be required to ensure the team can develop and build the necessary skills to promote consistently positive outcomes for children.

We acknowledge that the service has experienced staffing issues and that the current staffing shortages across the sector were providing challenges. However, despite recent changes to the teams, staff demonstrated positive relationships and teamwork. The management structure has also changed. Roles should know be defined to ensure all staff are aware of the responsibilities they need to undertake to ensure standards are maintained.

Staff accessed learning opportunities through an on-line platform. The manager recognised the need to build understanding of national practice guidance within the team especially around schematic play and Realising the Ambition. Staff in each playroom should try to complete training at the same time, this would ensure they will have a shared learning experience and be able to bring their new knowledge to improving practice and provision in their room.

Staff told us that the manager offers good pastoral care and support. However, the manager needs to ensure that all staff receive formal supervision sessions. This will identify gaps in their skills and knowledge and work around expectations of training across the service. Staff should be supported to reflect more effectively on their achievements and areas for development. Mentoring for new staff and newly formed teams should continue which will help to build shared expectations of practice.

Staff were meeting within their rooms and communicated through social media. Regular team meetings should recommence to allow staff to share practice issues and communicate their ideas. This would allow them to keep up to date with important information, be included and to ask questions.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The management team valued the opinions of children and parents to help improve the service. Parents told us they felt confident in the nursery and that the management team and staff were welcoming and approachable. During the pandemic the service continued to communicate with parents using various methods including social media and emails. Parents confirmed that phone calls, emails and daily chats were used to support communication, sharing of information, and children's learning. Parental feedback had been

sought and used to make changes and support improvement. This helped the team to evaluate families' experiences.

The nursery received support from the local authority and used this to inform their plans for improvement. Priorities for development were appropriate and specific. The team demonstrated that they were receptive to advice and made appropriate changes to improve experiences for children. Self-evaluation now needs to be firmly embedded into the process of evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole. It will help support more reflective practice and improve outcomes for children.

Monitoring and observation helped the team identify areas that were working well and also those that needed improvement. However, these processes were not yet fully embedded and the management team were aware of the improvements needed. As planned, the managers should develop a clear, structured and achievable plan for monitoring all aspects of the nursery. They should continue to develop their understanding of frameworks, evaluation tools and best practice guidance to rigorously evaluate the service and identify areas for improvement to be addressed.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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