

Cornerstones Nursery Day Care of Children

Loon Brae House
Ashgrove Road
Ratray
Blairgowrie
PH10 7BS

Telephone: 01250 876 165

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 March 2021

Service provided by:
Hartley and Gordon Nurseries Limited

Service provider number:
SP2015012587

Service no:
CS2015341434

About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 28 July 2016.

Cornerstones Nursery operates from a detached villa in Rattray, Blairgowrie. Playrooms for the youngest children are located on the second floor with children aged between three and five years cared for on the ground floor. Children on the ground floor have direct access to a well resourced, enclosed nursery garden.

The nursery is privately owned and works in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council to provide funded early learning and childcare.

The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 51 children aged from birth to not yet attending primary school of whom no more than 23 are under three years and of who 13 are under two years. The outdoor space has been considered when agreeing the maximum number of children aged over 3 years and not yet attending primary school. Children must have access to the outdoor space at all times. Other conditions unique to the service state, that due to planning restrictions the service can only operate between the hours of 08:00 and 17:30.

We found that the service adhered to these conditions.

We wrote this report following an unannounced, focused inspection which evaluated how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic. Three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection using a blended approach of virtual and on-site scrutiny.

We started the inspection on 16 March 2021 and gave feedback to the management team on 23 March 2021.

What people told us

Following the onsite visit we contacted seven parents by telephone. They told us:

'Staff are very approachable.'

'My child was desperate to get back, loves playing outdoors, I felt confident taking my child to nursery.'

'I love it, the outside play is fantastic, my child loves the tree swing.'

'My child sings the hand washing song all the time at home.'

'The videos they sent to us before reopening again were really good and helped my child to settle back in.'

'Fantastic nursery, very good communication when the nursery was closed.'

'Staff know my child very well.'

'Staff work very hard and I have always felt secure sending my child to the nursery.'

'My child is constantly outside.'

'They are very good, they pick up on the interest's of the child. I'm going to buy my child a mud kitchen for their birthday as they love playing with that at nursery.'

'I feel they are doing everything they can to keep us all safe.'

'They are brilliant, they have gone above and beyond with information to keep us all very well informed.'

'I was able to message them before we returned to nursery so they could follow my lead with personal care.'

'The outside space is not just for running around in, there's so much learning happening in the garden.'

'The food is brilliant, balanced and nutritious. My child is trying foods they would not have at home.'

'My child loves washing their hands and will sing the hand washing song.'

The children we spoke with told us:

'We wash our hands all the time.'

'I wash my hands before snack and lunch and after playing.'

'I've been playing with my friends in there and in here is our mud kitchen.'

'We're making super duper hard concrete.'

'I can tell you about the germs you know, we wash our hands to get rid of them.'

'You can crawl here like this, you climb up like this.'

'We don't like the germs.'

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 and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 5.1: Children's health and wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19.

Children are nurtured and supported throughout their changed experience in their early learning and childcare setting.

Effective communication with families enables responsive care to support children through changing circumstances.

On arrival at Cornerstones Nursery the children were sitting outdoors finishing their lunch within their cohort groups. They were actively engaging with the staff and their peers and enjoying their lunch experience. It was evident that the staff knew the children very well and children were observed to be very happy and confident with their routines.

The children had access to exciting play areas providing opportunities to be curious and explore in the well-resourced nursery garden. We found them to be very engaged in their outdoor play, they were having fun with their friends within their groups. The children showed us an outdoor sink where they washed their hands. This area was well used by the children, which told us they were confident with their hand hygiene routines.

We found staff to have a respectful and very nurturing and respectful approach with the children which supported positive relationships. Staff were available for support when needed and intervened in children's play with timely interventions. We observed staff and children work well together to manage risky play experiences. Staff respected their decisions; therefore children were making informed choices about how to keep themselves safe during play.

We identified strengths, in the service's implementation of COVID-19 guidance which impacted positively on children's outcomes.

Effective communication with families ensured that children were very well supported to understand the changes to their childcare experiences. Sensitive and well thought out planning for the children's return to nursery ensured that children benefitted from clear routines. For example, the team shared a video with families to demonstrate the new layout of the playrooms. Similarly, parents told us that a video of staff unpacking new resources helped children feel excited about their return to nursery.

Settling in procedures were adapted to support children and effective information sharing meant staff were fully informed on children's individual needs and interests. A planned focus on health and wellbeing ensured children were fully supported to express their feelings on returning to nursery. Key staff were available daily to speak with parents at the nursery gate. Staff supported children well despite changes to working patterns due to COVID-19 guidance.

We found children to have a very good understanding of how COVID-19 was affecting them and how they keep themselves safe.

Quality Indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.

Children are protected as staff take all the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

Good infection prevention control measures were in place to support a safe environment for children. This included robust risk assessments, clear policies and procedures, and cleaning schedules. The manager monitored staff practice in key areas of infection prevention and control. Where identified improvements were identified these were actioned and followed up. This ensured that all staff had a shared understanding of the measures put in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. We asked the service to review the cleaning schedule for some areas of the service, to ensure frequently touched points were not overlooked.

Children were well supported in developing an understanding of good hygiene and were confident with the processes. We heard children independently sing the hand washing song when washing their hands. Children confidently talked us through their hand hygiene routine stage by stage and were keen to show us how they did this effectively. They shared their knowledge of germs with us and told us how they kept themselves safe. This told us their learning experiences were fun, held their interest and had developed their understanding of how to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The service maximised the use of the outdoor space. Outdoor play areas were specific to cohorts, avoiding shared spaces and resources, which minimised the risk of infection. We saw that children had the appropriate outdoor clothing and some areas of the nursery garden provided shelter. This ensured that changeable weather did not reduce their time outdoors. This helped to support children in being active and healthy while keeping everyone safe from COVID-19.

The playrooms were seen to be equipped in a way that provided high quality play experiences. Following an improvement made at the previous inspection we observed the sleep rooms to be calm, nurturing, well ventilated and maintained at a comfortable temperature. This provided a space where children could relax, rest and feel safe and secure.

Staff were observed to be maintaining physical distancing practices and when unable to do so were wearing face coverings. We would ask the service to monitor staff practice when wearing face coverings, to ensure a shared understanding of the correct procedure.

Staff and parents were well informed on expectations around remaining at home when unwell or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. We found all staff to be confident in the procedure should a child become unwell while attending the service.

We found management responsive to a suggestion we made during our visit and they had informed parents of the new procedure before the inspection was concluded.

Quality Indicator 5.3: Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19.

Staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and families.

Staff are well supported and confident.

Staff were warm, friendly and enthusiastic. It was evident that the children's wellbeing was at the centre of their work. Staff told us it was important to them that the children felt safe, happy and secure at nursery.

The staff team demonstrated a very positive ethos which promoted a happy and secure environment for children.

Staff worked well together and supported each other with the additional demands required in response to COVID-19 guidance. Staff were very clear, confident, and committed to their roles in keeping everyone safe. Following a requirement made at the previous inspection, we found the service to be appropriately staffed to meet the children's needs. Particular attention had been paid to the times of the day where staff would require support. For example, support staff were available when children made transitions from lunch and sleep to play and the additional demands of cleaning regimes in line with COVID-19 guidance.

Communication throughout the day was very well managed. Each member of staff had a radio, and this allowed staff to request support from other staff members. This ensured that children's needs were met in a timely manner. As a result, children were well cared for and their needs were met consistently.

Staff told us they were well informed of procedures put in place and what was expected of them on their return to work. All staff had been trained in; infection, prevention and control measures, national COVID-19 guidance, effective hand washing and the wearing of face coverings. Staff told us they felt safe at work and it was clear that children had benefitted from the training that staff had accessed. Parents spoke very highly of the nursery and the staff team they told us 'they have gone above and beyond to ensure that the nursery is providing a safe environment for the children'.

There was a robust induction process in place and new staff members told us they were fully informed of COVID-19 practices prior to starting in their role. Following a requirement from the previous inspection we looked at safe recruitment. All new staff had been recruited appropriately.

The management team were conscientious and committed to ensuring that staff felt supported. They were visible on the nursery floor, providing leadership that allowed the staff to discuss any worries or concerns. Weekly 'wellbeing posts' kept staff motivated and feeling valued. The staff we spoke with told us, the management team were very approachable and understanding of the added demands made on them aligned with COVID-19 guidance.

The management and staff worked well together and were vigilant in maintaining a safe environment for the children and their families.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service, the provider must ensure that no member of staff delivers care unless they have undergone appropriate recruitment checks, including references and Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited.' (HSCS 4.24).

It is also necessary to comply with Regulation 9 of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland Regulations 2011.

Timescale: by 02 September 2019.

This requirement was made on 27 August 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement

All new staff had been safely recruited with the appropriate checks prior to commencing their roles.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

In order to ensure that the individual care needs of children are being met in a person-centred way the management team must ensure that all areas of the service are appropriately staffed.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My needs are met by the right number of people.' (HSCS 3.15).

It is also necessary to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland Regulations 2011.

Timescale: by 02 September 2019

This requirement was made on 27 August 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service was appropriately staffed. Additional staff have been employed to support staff with lunchtimes, cover staff breaks and to help with enhanced cleaning regimes.

Met - within timescales

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

Staff should review the lunchtime provision to ensure it meets the needs of all children and provides choice and independence.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected.' (HSCS 1.34).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2019.

Action taken since then

This improvement was not fully assessed at this inspection as the children we're finishing their lunch when we arrived at the service. This improvement will be looked at in more detail at the next full inspection.

Previous area for improvement 2

Medication permissions and plans should be clear and follow current best practice guidance. Emergency medications should be easily accessible should they be required.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2019.

Action taken since then

All medication permissions and plans followed current best practice guidance.

Previous area for improvement 3

Staff should ensure that rooms used by the children are maintained at an appropriate temperature.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My environment has plenty of natural light and fresh air, and the lighting, ventilation and heating can be adjusted to meet my needs and wishes.' (HSCS 5.19).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2019.

Action taken since then

All rooms were well ventilated and maintained at appropriate temperatures.

Previous area for improvement 4

Numbers of children in the sleep room should be reduced to ensure children have adequate space to move freely and to support their privacy and dignity.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes.' (HSCS 5.20).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2019.

Action taken since then

Two sleep rooms were provided for children to rest. These were calm and nurturing and provided adequate space for each child to rest comfortably.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	5 - Very Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	4 - Good
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	5 - Very Good

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