Inspection report

Psychology Department Playgroup
Day Care of Children
University of Stirling
Stirling    FK9 4LA

Inspected by: Leigh Ferguson
(Care Commission Officer)
Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 23 June 2009
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<th><strong>Inspection Completed</strong></th>
<th><strong>Period since last inspection</strong></th>
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<td>Springfield House</td>
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<td>Laurelhill Business Park</td>
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Introduction
The Psychology Department Playgroup is situated within the Stirling University campus on the outskirts of Bridge of Allan. The service is currently registered to provide a service for 16 children aged between 2 years 9 months and 5 years. The service operates Monday to Friday 9am to 12pm.

The premises were well maintained and staff had created a bright, stimulating and attractive environment for children.

The Playgroup states that their aim is "that your child should have stimulating play, covering a wide range of activities, encouraging your child to use his/her imagination, to build his/her confidence and to interact with others in a safe and happy environment".

The overall management of the service is the responsibility of a committee comprising of members of staff from the psychology department. The staff team is comprised of two qualified members of staff.

The service was registered with the Care Commission on 1 April 2002.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:
Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment - 5 - Very Good
Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership - 4 - Good

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission’s assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission’s website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

Before the Inspection

The Annual Return
The service submitted a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission.

The Self-Assessment Form
The service submitted a self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission

Views of service users
Two service user's questionnaires were returned to the Care Commission. Additionally the service issued their own questionnaires. These questionnaires demonstrated a high level of user satisfaction across all areas of service provision.

Regulation Support Assessment
The inspection plan for this service was decided after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an
assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection process

Staff at inspection

The announced inspection was carried out by Leigh Ferguson, Care Commission Officer (CCO) who made a visit to the service on the 23rd June 2009. A discussion with the service on grading took place following the inspection.

Evidence

During Inspection, evidence was gathered from a number of sources, including:
Discussion with both members of playgroup staff.
Discussion with three parents/carers.

A review of a range of policies, procedures and records and other documentation included the following:

* Service Information
* Newsletters
* Children's Early Years Profiles
* Complaints Procedure
* Aims and Objectives
* Service Users Questionnaires as issued by the playgroup
* Registration Certificate
* Confidentiality Policy
* Child Protection Policy
* Risk Assessments
* Questionnaires

The CCO also inspected the environment and spent time observing the staff interact with the children in their care.

All of the above information was taken into account as part of the inspection process and used to assess the performance of the service in relation to the chosen quality statements.

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09
Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at: http://www.carecommission.com/

Fire Safety Issues
The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

**Action taken on requirements since last Inspection**
No requirements were made as a result of the last inspection.

**Comments on Self Assessment**
The service was asked to complete a self assessment tool before the inspection. The completed self assessment contained detailed information about the strengths of the service, in addition to identifying areas of improvement.

**View of Service Users**
Children were observed to be familiar and comfortable with the routines of the playgroup and happily engaged in the activities provided. Most were comfortable and confident in their interactions with other children and with staff.

The CCO observed a good range of activities on offer to the children such as crafts, messy play (dough, paint and glue), sand/water, a reading area, home corner and a computer area.

**View of Carers**
During the inspection process the CCO consulted with three parents and the comments expressed were very positive.

The service’s own parents and carers questionnaires reflected that they were happy with the service provided for their child.

The following comments were made:

"It is an excellent facility with brilliant staff. It provides ideal preparation for nursery/school".

"Playgroup provides an excellent environment for young children - a happy and relaxed atmosphere coupled with a good introduction to routines".
Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

The service had a very good approach to involving children and families in assessing and influencing the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

As part of their introduction to the service parents were given detailed information about the service provision, including aims and objectives and service policies. During their children's time at the playgroup various methods are used to keep families informed such as the issue of information through newsletters, letters home, formal and informal meetings.

There was good evidence parent's and children's views were responded to, resulting in improvement to the quality of care and support. Two parents commented through a questionnaire that they would like to receive more information about their child's daily experience of the playgroup. In response to this, parents/carers can now access information about the daily snack, what book was read that day and what activities were undertaken by the playgroup as a whole. This information is posted on the playgroup door.

Children's thoughts and views were also sought through day to day observations, conversations and group times.

Observations on the children's development are made regularly by staff. They can then be transferred periodically to the appropriate child's individual folder for future reference. These folders are completed to a very good standard, with detailed information about the child's progress. Parents can access these at any time, and can add their own observations. This provides good continuity in recording children's progress between the home and nursery.

The nursery holds regular sessions in order for parents to discuss their child's progress.

Areas for Development

The playgroup wish to improve their consultation with parents. The CCO agrees with this. The service should continue to ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support within the service.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations
Statement 4: We use a range of communication methods to ensure we meet the needs of service users.

Service Strengths

The service evidenced very well that they use a range of communication methods to meet the needs of service users. Evidenced contained under 1.1 is also relevant to this quality statement.

On the day of inspection staff were observed to be readily available for informal discussion with parents/carers and formal appointments can be made if required. The individual needs and circumstances of each child are made known to staff via pre admission communication and the recording of children's information in their profile folders. This is expanded on via ongoing observation within the nursery and by ongoing discussion and information sharing between parents/carers and nursery staff. This allows children's progress and development to be monitored and forms the basis for shared information regarding the wellbeing of each child.

A relatively high proportion of the children in attendance do not speak English as a first language. Discussion with nursery staff and observation of the resources available evidence a very good degree of understanding and of partnership working with parents in order to deal with the particular challenges this can give rise to within the playgroup setting.

Parents are regularly encouraged to share their skills within the playgroup setting. Opportunities are also provided for parents to be involved if they cannot be present physically, for example by sharing music from home.

Areas for Development

The playgroup would like to further involve parents in the life of the playgroup and intends to explore ways of doing this. The CCO agrees with this plan of action.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0
Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.

Service Strengths

The service had a very strong approach to involving children, parents and carers in assessing the quality of the environment using the methods already described in quality statement 1.1.

Photos of all activities undertaken at playgroup are displayed at child height on the nursery wall. Each child has a smiley face symbol which they personalise themselves. This is placed on the photo of the activity they would most like to do. This is then taken into account when planning the child's activities at playgroup that day thus promoting choice.

The playgroup has Early Years Outdoors membership of Grounds for Learning, a charity which helps early years settings make the most of their outdoor spaces for play and learning. The playgroup have boxes outside in which they have planted fruit and vegetables. They have a compost box.

The children have access to the larger university campus for walks. A hold-a-ring walking rope ensures their safety in built up areas.

Areas for Development

The playgroup should continue to work to their current high standards. Having implemented procedures via which service users can contribute to the service they should continue to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 2: We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected

Service Strengths

Children were cared for in accessible, well maintained premises which were warm, bright, spacious and welcoming for children and families. Arrangements for children's safety and security were good with suitable risk assessments and a framework of health and safety
policies and procedures which were well known to staff.

The entrance to the playgroup is secure with an external door code in place and internally two handles - one at adult height - prevents children from leaving the premises unobserved.

Care and consideration was given to the creation of a safe, pleasing and stimulating environment suitable to the needs of the children attending. Use of space was well planned and children had access to a wide range of activities and resources which stimulated their interests and provided opportunities for experiential play and learning.

Furniture had been purchased which was suitable in size for a variety of children.

Areas accessed by the children included a playroom, cloakroom and toilet facilities. The toilets were clean and odour free and water temperature was appropriate.

A range of information for families was displayed in the cloakroom area and examples of children's art work and informative displays were displayed throughout the premises.

**Areas for Development**

**CCO Grading**

5 - Very Good

**Number of Requirements**

0

**Number of Recommendations**

0
Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service Strengths

The playgroup performs strongly in terms of assessing the quality of the staffing using the methods already mentioned in quality statements 1.1, 2.1.

Questionnaires seeking the views and suggestions of parents/carers had relevance for staff performance.

The parents and carers spoken with during the inspection felt that the staff team knew their children well as individuals, interacted well with them and treated them respectfully and fairly.

The staff in post are long serving members of staff which provides good continuity of care for the children attending the playgroup. Both are disclosure checked every three years. The staff are involved in systematic evaluation of the playgroup which takes account of relevant national and local advice.

Areas for Development

The playgroup should continue to work to their current high standards. Having implemented procedures via which service users can contribute to the service they should continue to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 2: We are confident that our staff have been recruited, and inducted, in a safe and robust manner to protect service users and staff.

Service Strengths

The performance in relation to this quality statement was very good.

Staff were appropriately recruited and staff retention within the nursery is very good, which contributes towards good continuity of care for the children.

All staff employed were experienced in the nursery setting. Qualified staff have been
registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Annual reviews are offered to staff to review their performance/achievement. A record of staff training is kept and referred to at this appraisal and access to ongoing training is readily available.

Staff were familiar with the range of policies and procedures which formed a framework to support good practice within the service. Policies are updated regularly and staff are required to refresh their understanding.

There was a positive and welcoming atmosphere within the playgroup and the staff team worked together effectively to produce good outcomes for children and families accessing the service.

Parental feedback from inspection was very positive and confirmed that staff were supportive, approachable and helpful to both parents/carers and service users.

**Areas for Development**

The playgroup state that their induction for relief staff could be improved. The CCO agrees with this plan of action.

**CCO Grading**

5 - Very Good

**Number of Requirements**

0

**Number of Recommendations**

0
Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

The service had a good approach to involving children, parents and carers in assessing the quality of the service using the methods already described in quality statement 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1.

Formal staff meetings and committee meetings are recorded.

Areas for Development

The playgroup have started to record consultation with children. They intend to seek advice from Scottish Pre-school Play Association on the most effective way to consult with children to best allow them to express themselves. The CCO agrees with this plan of action.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 4: We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.

Service Strengths

We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.

See also 1.1,2.1,3.1 and 4.1. The service's approach to this quality statement was very good.

A variety of methods were used to assess and evaluate the quality of service provision. Staff and management worked co-operatively in annual self assessment and evaluation processes, including Care Commission self assessment.

Notifications:

The service was aware of their responsibilities in relation to making appropriate notifications to the SSSC in the event of dealing with staff misconduct. All qualified staff are registered with the SSSC and aware of the code of practice and how this pertains to their work practice.
The service confirmed awareness of their responsibility to notify matters of misconduct to the Care Commission. They were aware that notification forms are available on the Care Commission website.

**Areas for Development**

The playgroup should continue to work to their current high standards. Having implemented procedures via which service users can contribute to the service they should continue to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

**CCO Grading**

5 - Very Good

**Number of Requirements**

0

**Number of Recommendations**

0
Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards
Enforcement
There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

Requirements

Recommendations

Leigh Ferguson
Care Commission Officer