

# Department of Psychology Playgroup Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 30 November 2016

**Service provided by:**  
Psychology Department Playgroup

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001112

**Care service number:**  
CS2003005371

## About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

This service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The Department of Psychology Playgroup is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 16 children aged from 2 years 9 months to 5 years with a maximum of 5 children under 3 years permitted at any session. There were 11 children present during our inspection visit.

The service is located on the University of Stirling campus and is open to children from the local community and children whose parents work or study at the university. A committee of university staff has overall management responsibility for the service and there are also parent representatives on the committee. There is a manager and a permanent member of staff who run the day-to-day service and a small bank of supply staff are available to work as and when required.

The service operates Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 12:00 hours during term time.

The main aims of the service include:

- To assist in the all-round development of each child, promote stimulating play covering a wide range of activities, encourage each child to use his/her imagination, build his/her confidence and to interact with others in a safe and happy environment.

A full statement of aims and objectives is available from the service on request.

Children attending the playgroup may be asked to take part in research by staff and students within the Psychology Department. This happens only if parents have given their consent and children are happy to participate.

At this inspection we focused on two aspects within Care and Support. These were:

- Transitions - how the service supported children to move into and on from the service and through changes in their lives
- How the service kept children safe (child protection)

We also focused on one aspect of management and leadership: This was:

- How management and staff used self-evaluation and quality assurance systems to monitor and improve the quality of the service

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve.

Getting it right for every child is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it right for every child. They are: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible; and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

## What people told us

Children were happy and relaxed in the setting and familiar with daily routines. They enjoyed playing together with friends and exploring the various activities available. Some showed sustained interest in investigating the water, discussing concepts such as full and empty. Others enjoyed using their senses to explore natural resources such as leaves discussing how these felt and how the seasons were changing. Children told us that they liked to play with their friends and that they shared things at playgroup.

We received three completed care standards questionnaires from parents and spoke to six parents/carers during our inspection. Parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with the quality of care and support their children received at the service. They felt that staff knew their children well and were very supportive and caring. They told us how children were benefiting from attending the service, for example, they talked about children developing confidence, social and communication skills. Parents also found staff welcoming and keen to hear their views and to share information with them. Comments included:

"Very welcoming setting. There is always plenty to engage the children so that they play and learn."

"It is a small service and they like to keep you involved."

"My child settled in well. The service has been great and children love it."

"Staff are knowledgeable and genuinely interested in every child's development, treating them as individuals and always with respect and care."

"Stirling University playgroup provides a stimulating, fun environment for my child to learn through play. The staff are excellent: well qualified, experienced and enthusiastic. Nature and the outside environment is well catered for through interesting experiments and lots of outside walks."

## Self assessment

The service submitted a fully completed self-assessment before our inspection. This gave extensive evidence under each quality statement about what the service did well and what they planned to improve. The self-assessment gave a useful insight to the service and aspects that management and staff had taken forward recently. This helped to inform our inspection process. We agreed that the service should continue to focus on summarising key strengths, outcomes achieved and improvement plans within self-assessment.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

## What the service does well

Staff had created a very welcoming and inclusive ethos. They took time to get to know children and parents well and to gather and share relevant information. This supported effective transition arrangements that were sensitive and flexible to individual needs. Staff were very nurturing to children. They provided reassurance where required and helped them to settle and engage in activities of their choice. A wide range of very good approaches including; a child friendly booklet, photographs and comforters from home, books in different languages, space to store belongings and Bertie Bear (home link soft toy and diary) all served to promote positive outcomes for children settling into the service or experiencing changes in their lives. Staff had started to pro-actively make links with other services to further develop how they supported children moving on from the service or where there were shared placements.

A widespread review of safeguarding procedures was underway to look at what was effective and how the service could further improve practice. We found that staff were very aware of their roles and responsibilities to protect children and had made some changes to further safeguard children, including improving registration arrangements at the start of the session and closely monitoring and recording children as they left and returned for research work. A wide range of procedures and protocols, for example, for research students were in place to promote children's safety and wellbeing. Staff had worked very well with children to develop their knowledge and skills in assessing and managing risk through play and daily routines such as going outside. This supported children to achieve life skills, independence and responsibility.

The new manager had been in post for three months. In that time, she had worked well with staff to look closely at what was working well in the service and to identify priorities for improvement. As a team they had taken forward initial plans, including; making improvements to transition procedures, implementing a risk/benefit approach to enhance children's learning and skills development and improving access to outdoor play and learning experiences. A range of other good procedures also served to monitor the work of staff and the service as a whole. For example, 'Achieving Success' (staff appraisal) and staff meetings enabled them to reflect on practice and to plan training and development objectives. The committee monitored the service well through regular meetings, policy reviews and through open days for parents to share research work.

## What the service could do better

The service should continue with plans to further enhance transition arrangements through making effective links with other services in the community.

The service should complete the review of safeguarding procedures and take forward any action plans identified as a result.

The service should continue to develop outdoor learning experiences for children by making regular and effective use of the natural environment.

We sign posted the service to some current self-evaluation tools and good practice guidance (How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare and Building the Ambition). We suggested that staff may find these helpful in further developing their approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. This may support them to undertake activities in a more focused and measured way and to identify the impact on outcomes for children and families.

We discussed how the service could further develop personal plans for children to show progress, outcomes and next steps and how these could fit within overall record keeping, including chronologies.

We gave the service some advice on the structure of daily routines and on further developing a communication friendly environment.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
23 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
14 Nov 2012	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
8 Oct 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
23 Jun 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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