

Hanover Street School Nursery Day Care of Children

Hanover Street School
Beach Boulevard
Aberdeen
AB24 5HN

Telephone: 01224 569 880

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 November 2023

Service provided by:
Aberdeen City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000349

Service no:
CS2003014434

About the service

Hanover Street School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children at any one time, from three years up to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is accommodated within Hanover Street School, located in a residential area of Aberdeen close to the Beach Boulevard. The children are cared for in one large playroom with a kitchen area and integral toilets. The outdoor play area is solely used by nursery children and is fenced off to the rest of the playground. Nearby amenities include the Beach Boulevard, parks, and supermarkets.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 and 8 November 2023. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

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

Key messages

- Children and their families were cared for in an inclusive and welcoming setting.
- Ongoing improvements to mealtimes meant most children enjoyed a positive snack and lunch experience.
- Whilst children had fun and were engaged in their play, staff did not always demonstrate the knowledge and skills in providing high quality learning experiences.
- Some areas of the nursery were in need of care and attention to ensure children were able to play in a well maintained environment.
- The managers of the service demonstrated a commitment to initiating change involving all stakeholders. Quality assurance, including self evaluation and improvement plans, were in place and beginning to impact on improvement outcomes for children.
- Staff morale had improved significantly and everyone wanted to do their best for the families and children in their care.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children and their families were cared for in an inclusive and welcoming setting. Opportunities to build relationships were available at arrival and pick-up times, play-and-stay sessions, and when helping on nursery walks and visits in the local community. Parents felt staff were kind and approachable and they commented positively on the individual support provided in order to meet their family's needs.

Children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches which supported their overall wellbeing. Staff spoke with kind voices and were patient and encouraging, helping children form positive attachments. Children arriving in Aberdeen from other countries were provided with loving interactions and guidance and they responded to staff with affectionate cuddles and smiles. Staff were compassionate and respectful of children's dignity when supporting children with their personal care, always ensuring they were happy and at ease.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the use of effective personal planning. Those children with an identified additional need had information and clear strategies to help staff support them. These had recently been reviewed with parents to support a consistent approach and promote working together. Parents told us they felt staff knew their children well and felt confident their needs were being met.

Children enjoyed positive snack and mealtimes. Lunchtimes were a key area for ongoing development which staff were very proud of. Improvements were seen in the organisation and routine of lunch. Most children sat well at the table and were confident to collect their food, ask for seconds, and empty their plates. The manager advised further improvements, such as promoting children's independence, were ongoing.

Opportunities for rest and recuperation could be better to support children's resilience and emotional security. A few personal plans indicated children may need quiet time and rest. However, we did not see enough opportunities for children to relax or rest. We suggested at times, such as after lunch, some children might benefit from an opportunity for a story with staff or to rest with quieter activities and soothing music. The manager agreed to action this. Children were kept safe and well by systems and procedures to support the safe administration of medication.

Children were protected from harm by knowledgeable and competent staff who followed the service's child protection procedures. When necessary, relevant agencies had been contacted to ensure children and families were provided with the care and support they needed to keep them safe.

1.3 Play and learning

Planning approaches were in the process of change to support children's learning and development. Staff were growing in confidence in planning activities to support children's learning and development. Children had fun and were engaged in their play. Activities included making flower pictures, exploring ice, and games with conkers. A few children demonstrated a good level of concentration and creativity when creating Lego models. Observations were beginning to be used to provide individualised learning experiences. This was part of the service improvement plan and ongoing.

Staff did not consistently demonstrate the skills necessary to support high quality play and learning experiences. Staff interactions were kind and supportive to engage and help children. There was some discussion around ice and the weather, helping to develop children's understanding of the world around them. However, staff were not consistent in their approach to extending children's learning through effective questioning. Staff did not always demonstrate an understanding of safe activities that are suitable for children. For example, salt was provided as a mark making material for children. This was brought to the manager's attention and immediately removed (see area for improvement 1).

Literacy and numeracy development was evident in some play experiences. We observed some spontaneous song time, stories and rhymes, and some children were helped to recognise and write their names. Whilst games, such as What's the Time Mr. Wolf, provided opportunities for counting, it would be beneficial to have more experiences to support numeracy development embedded through play. This was an area recognised in the service improvement plan and is ongoing.

Children's physical and emotional health was promoted through opportunities to play outdoors. Children had fun climbing on trees, running around, and playing games.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience high quality play, learning, and development opportunities that are safe and meet their individual learning needs, the manager should continue to develop staff skills, knowledge, and competency in providing high quality play and learning experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27); and 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice, and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Children were cared for in a bright and spacious environment. Good use of other areas in the school, such as the gym and sensory room, provided children with opportunities to run around or play quietly on their own in a safe environment.

At a previous inspection we identified some areas of the nursery were in need of care and attention. These included ensuring:

- walls and painted surfaces were in good order
- all doors and surfaces were clean
- the nappy changing areas did not have any intrusive smells
- any holes in walls were repaired
- furniture, walls, and radiators are clean and well presented for children
- worktop areas around sinks are in full working order
- flooring is safe for use and in good working order.

At this inspection we found the nappy changing area did not have any intrusive smells and the flooring had been replaced. Other areas still looked neglected and still required repair to ensure children's safety, health, and wellbeing (see requirement 1).

Children did not yet fully benefit from a play environment that was homely or comfortable with plentiful resources. Progress had been made in developing the learning environment and some areas looked more attractive and inviting. For example, the purchase of a new painting easel and natural materials in the art and craft area supported creative and imaginative play. Other areas, such the house corner, lacked high quality resources and limited children's play (see area for improvement 1).

Children were not always kept safe and well by effective infection prevention and control measures. Handwashing was not always effectively supervised to keep children safe and well. Handwashing before lunch was completed in the playroom and children then held banisters and doors before entering the canteen. The toilets were not always flushed or clean for children to use despite having introduced a checklist. Blankets, pillows, and cushions available for children to sleep on looked unclean, stained, and did not smell fresh. These concerns were addressed with the manager and immediate action was taken (see area for improvement 2).

The outdoor area was safe for children to access and play. Risk assessments were under review and the manager and staff recognised the importance of involving children in this process. Although staff described current limitation on areas of the playground, such as the sand pit, other areas had been developed and new planters had been purchased. Further developments were ongoing.

Requirements

1. By 12 April 2024, the provider must ensure children experience a well maintained, comfortable, and homely environment. The provider, manager, and staff should ensure that actions are taken to repair some areas of the nursery.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- walls and painted surfaces were in good order
- all doors and surfaces are clean
- any holes in walls are repaired
- furniture, walls, and radiators are clean and well presented for children
- worktop areas around sinks are in full working order
- kitchen units and cupboard doors are repaired.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, and well maintained premises, furnishings, and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children have fun and experience high quality play and learning, the manager and staff should ensure all areas of the learning environment are well resourced, clean, and attractive.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, and well maintained premises, furnishings, and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

2. To help keep children safe and well, the manager should ensure children's health and safety in relation to effective infection prevention and control. This should include, but not be limited to, effective supervision when handwashing.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, and well maintained premises, furnishings, and equipment' (HSCS 5.24); and 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice, and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

The managers demonstrated a commitment to initiating change involving all stakeholders to improve outcomes for children. They were fairly new to the role and recognised the importance of building relationships with staff to promote a positive ethos where everyone felt valued for their contributions. Staff told us they felt much more supported by management, they liked the structure, and knowing what was expected of them. They spoke very positively about the managers and expressed they felt happier coming to work.

The vision, values, and aims of the service included aspiring to be a safe, playful, and happy setting that is full of warmth, smiles, love, and laughter. This meant staff and parents knew what to expect of the service.

Parental engagement was recognised as an area for ongoing development. Stay-and-play sessions had been reintroduced and parents had been involved in the consultation for lunch routines. Further ways to improve parental involvement and engagement included Parents as Early Education Partners (PEEP) and the use of questionnaires.

Self evaluation was beginning to impact on improved experience for children. Staff were included in the process and their views and suggestions were used to make changes. They were encouraged to take responsibility for improving the learning environment and this was beginning to make a difference. Guidance, such as 'A Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding, and School-aged Childcare' and 'How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare', had been used to support staff in this process and was ongoing.

New quality assurances systems had been introduced to help identify areas of inconsistencies in practice and improve experiences for children. It was recognised there were some inconsistencies in staff knowledge and skills and measures were taken to improve this. This included developing the quality assurance calendar to ensure audits and monitoring were undertaken. Staff told us support and supervision was now in place and supportive of their professional development.

Areas for development were recognised in the service improvement plan, such as developing the environment, self evaluation skills, staff skills and knowledge, and parental engagement. Changes were ongoing and beginning to lead to improved outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Since the previous inspection, staff morale has improved significantly. Staff told us they enjoy coming to work and felt better supported. This led to improved relationships, better communication, and agreed standards to work towards.

Children were cared for by a mainly consistent staff team who knew their needs well. Parents told us they knew who staff were and felt confident in approaching them. Staff absences were managed well and, when needed, familiar regular relief staff were used. This led to a continuity of care and minimum disruption to children's routines.

Staff deployment worked well to meet children's care and learning needs. There were enough staff at key times, such as mealtimes or at arrival and departure, to keep children safe and well. All staff 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' they worked well together and supported each other in their role.

Improved communication and teamworking led to better outcomes for children. Staff informed a colleague when they were moving to a different area or when they were leaving the playroom. This led to improved engagement with the children across the day.

Children were cared for by a staff team with a mix of skills and experience. One staff member felt this was a strength of the service and promoted good outcomes for children. All staff were enthusiastic to further develop their knowledge and skills and were supported in this by management. Further training and development was ongoing.

Children were cared for by nurturing staff. Interactions were positive to build relationships and trust. This led to improved outcomes and helped ensure children and their families were provided with the care and support they needed. Staff told us, "Children and their families are at the centre and all the team work very hard to meet their needs".

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

To ensure children are nurtured and supported through their daily experiences the manager and staff should ensure that mealtimes are a safe, relaxing experience that meets the individual needs of children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19); and 'I can enjoy an unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

This area for improvement was made on 25 November 2022.

Action taken since then

Significant improvements to mealtimes times meant children enjoyed a safe, relaxing experience. Meals were served in the dining hall and most children were confident in the routines. Most children sat well at the table and enjoyed their lunch.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children have fun as they experience high quality play, learning, and development opportunities, the manager and staff should ensure that the cycle of observation, planning, and assessment is used to maximise children's successes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

This area for improvement was made on 25 November 2022.

Action taken since then

Planning approaches were in the process of change to support children's learning and development. Staff were growing in confidence in planning activities to support children's learning and development. Children had fun and were engaged in their play. Activities included making flower pictures, exploring ice, and games with conkers. A few children demonstrated a good level of concentration and creativity when creating Lego models. Observations were beginning to be used to provide individualised learning experience.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children experience a well maintained, comfortable, and homely environment, the provider, manager, and staff should ensure that actions are taken to repair some areas of the nursery.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- walls and painted surfaces are in good order
- all doors and surfaces are clean
- the nappy changing areas does not have any intrusive smells
- any holes in walls are repaired
- furniture, walls, and radiators and clean and well presented for children
- worktop areas around sinks are in full working order
- flooring is safe for use and in good working order.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, and well maintained premises, furnishings, and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was made on 25 November 2022.

Action taken since then

At this inspection we found the nappy changing area did not have any intrusive smells and the flooring had been replaced. Other areas still looked neglected and still required repair to ensure children's safety, health, and wellbeing.

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure high quality care and experiences for children, quality assurance and self evaluation should be embedded into practice.

This should mean that:

- children and families are meaningfully involved and influence changes within the setting
- quality assurance, including self evaluation and improvement plans, lead to high quality care and support.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance systems' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 25 November 2022.

Action taken since then

Parental engagement was recognised as an area for ongoing development. Stay-and-play sessions had been reintroduced, they had involved parents in the consultation for lunch routines. Further ways to improve parental engagement was ongoing.

Self evaluation was beginning to impact on improved experience for children. Staff were included in the process and their views and suggestions were used to make changes. New quality assurances systems had been introduced to help identify areas of inconsistencies in practice and improve experiences for children. These were recognised in the service improvement plan and improvements were ongoing.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To ensure the safety of children, the provider and manager should ensure that there is the right number of staff and that these staff are deployed in a way that meets children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15); and 'People have the time to support and care for me and to speak with me' (HSCS 3.16).

This area for improvement was made on 25 November 2022.

Action taken since then

Staff deployment worked well to meet children's care and learning needs. There were enough staff at key times, such as mealtimes or at arrival and departure, to keep children safe and well. Improved communication and teamworking led to better outcomes for children.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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