

Alphabet Yard Day Care of Children

Boat Vennel
20 New Bridge Street
South Harbour Street
Ayr
KA7 1JX

Telephone: 01292 260444

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

25 October 2018

Service provided by:

Elaine Buchanan

Service provider number:

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Service no:

CS2003020297

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

Alphabet Yard is a daycare service for children provided by a private provider in the town of Ayr. It is situated in a town centre location near to shops, transport and local amenities. The provider employs a manager who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery.

The nursery registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. Staff provide early learning and childcare for up to 59 children aged from birth to eight years of age. The nursery offers full and part day provision throughout the year.

The accommodation comprises of two playrooms on the ground floor for babies and toddlers and two playrooms on the first floor for children aged three years and over. There is also an enclosed outdoor play area.

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

Prior to inspection, we sent 16 care standard questionnaires to the manager to distribute to parents using the service. We received seven completed questionnaires prior to this inspection. The respondents to our questionnaire agreed that they were happy with the quality of care provided by the service. Comments made included:

"My daughter goes to the nursery 1 day a week and she loves it, very happy how they are treating her."

"Communication is excellent and I love being able to see what my child has been doing during the day on the online learning journals which includes photos."

"There is a good variety of activities from sensory play, creative activities, energetic play and going outdoors."

"My child is always happy when he arrives at nursery and he enjoys being there. He is happy to see the staff and they are happy to see him."

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. These demonstrated their priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

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	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Together staff and management had created a welcoming environment for children and families. Relationships between staff and children were positive, with staff providing regular support, encouragement and praise to children. We observed mostly confident and happy children who were keen to explore experiences on offer.

The lunchtime experience for children had improved significantly from our previous visit with children much more independent in the new routine. We observed children serving themselves and eating heartily. Children were encouraged to wash their hands prior to lunch time and at appropriate times throughout the day. We suggested that visual prompts could be displayed to further promote hand washing.

Planning processes were in place for all playrooms and were predominately responsive to children's needs and interests. Within the 2-3 room staff had taken the children to a local restaurant for snack then created their own 'mini restaurant.' We heard how this had stemmed from conversations with the children. Staff spoke positively of how the children had enjoyed this experience. To continue to develop planning processes, evaluations should now be consistently recorded, reflect learning intentions set out and be fully considered within the planning cycle.

Online journals were used to communicate information directly to parents about their child's learning and development progress. We found this system was accessed regularly by some families who were contributing to their child's learning. The service should continue to engage all parents in the use of the journals and consider how the children could be more involved in documenting their own learning. The online journals should be monitored regularly to ensure consistency in quality of information recorded.

We sampled personal plans and found that these were in place for all children and reflective of their individual health, welfare and safety needs. Information included demonstrated effective partnership working with other agencies; ensuring children were receiving the appropriate support.

Medication procedures were in place, supporting the safe administration and storage of medicines. Accidents and incidents were appropriately recorded and shared with parents. Audits were carried out to analyse information and necessary action taken when required.

Staff and students had a very good understanding of the service child protection policy and procedures and could talk about how to keep children safe. All staff had participated in training as part of their induction and were encouraged to complete online training to further their knowledge in this area.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We found that the service had been maintained to be safe, clean and well organised. Effective health and safety procedures were seen, including specific work undertaken to address the areas for improvement identified from a fire service visit and recent work undertaken to improve the nappy changing facilities.

We saw that the playrooms were well laid out. Within the 2-3 room and 3-5 rooms, a good range of resources including very good natural resources were seen to be easily accessible to the children encouraging their creativity and curiosity. We have asked the nursery to enhance the resources within the under two room.

During our inspection we saw the children access the nursery outdoor play area. We saw that the outdoor area was well used. A good range of resources were provided which supported the children's curiosity and exploration of the world around them. The children were observed accessing play areas with confidence, taking risks whilst being supported by staff.

Food preparation and storage areas for snacks were in keeping with food standards guidance. Staff had written details of individual children's allergies and information from the Foods Standard Agency on intolerances and food allergens was available. We felt that this supported the health and wellbeing of the children.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. Parents and children have opportunities to get to know staff. Staff recruitment files sampled were consistent with the current safer recruitment guidance. Staff and students undertake induction programmes prior to deployment. A staff and student handbook are provided to all staff and students are supported by a designated mentor within the nursery.

Positive relationships were observed between staff and children. Children were treated with respect and staff created good opportunities for the children to be involved within the decision-making in the service. Some staff members undertake leadership roles within the nursery. Staff told us that they enjoyed leading aspects of the nursery practice and that they felt this allowed staff to expand their knowledge and develop their leadership skills.

Discussion with staff and management during this inspection highlighted that staff felt they had opportunity to discuss their work. A structure for staff support was in place this included regular staff meetings, informal monitoring and annual staff appraisal. We sampled the nursery training calendar and saw that a range of training and professional learning opportunities were provided. Staff we spoke with told us they felt they had access to relevant training and they shared information of how some of the training undertaken had impacted on their practice.

During our inspection we observed deployment of staff and staff practice within the nursery. We felt that overall this was effective, however we observed that the care, support and experiences for children in the under 2's room did not operate as well as the other rooms. We shared our findings with the management team during feedback and have asked them to review the deployment of staff to ensure a mix of staff skills and expertise across all playrooms. (Recommendation 1).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Quality of the care and support provided to all the children was not consistent across the nursery. Management should consider staff training and the deployment of staff to further ensure a mix of staff skills and expertise across all playrooms.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that, 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 (HSCS 3.14).

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The manager and provider were keen to promote positive outcomes for children and were committed to a cycle of continuous improvement. The service improvement plan was reflective of the current agenda and had considered the views of staff and parents.

We found the impact of the new manager to be positive in supporting a relaxed working ethos where staff felt valued and included. Staff told us they felt supported by their manager and could approach her with ease. We saw how the manager was supported by the provider who recognises the development and progress made within the service. We felt the positive relationship between the manager and provider had contributed to effective teamwork within the service.

A 'Meet our Team' display had been created to share relevant information about the staff team with parents. Feedback was gained from parents through various methods including a 'question of the month.' A 'you said, we did' display had been created by the service to respond to parents' comments.

The manager told us she was on a 'journey' and demonstrated a good understanding of the service's strengths and areas for development. The manager had established an effective monitoring and self-evaluation plan which considered the quality of experiences for the children, the environment, staff practice and record keeping. This included an audit of daily/weekly checks to ensure record keeping was maintained.

Best practice guidance was referenced in the planning of monitoring and self-evaluation and used to support judgement. The manager should continue to embed robust monitoring procedures within all aspects of the service to ensure consistency in quality of experiences and care provided.

Planning of self-evaluation and monitoring should be outcome focussed and evidence documented should include tracking of actions identified, outlining improvements made and impact for children, families and staff.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

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

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must comply with the requirements of the Fire Safety Enforcement Officer. This is in order to comply with:

SSI 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) - to make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of children by ensuring that fire safety is made and maintained to the required standard for the protection of children.
Timescale - before end December 2017

This requirement was made on 11 January 2018.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service submitted an action plan to Care Inspectorate on 26 January 2018. They wrote: Alphabet Yard was given recommendations from the fire service on changes to be made within the setting with regards to fire safety.

During our inspection visit on 25 October 2018 we sampled staff files and we found that the changes recommended by the fire service had been implemented.

Met - within timescales

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The manager needs to standardise recruitment procedures and record keeping and establish an appraisal calendar and training plan to ensure that staff are suitably equipped for the work they are to perform.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 12: Confidence in staff.

This recommendation was made on 11 January 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service submitted an action plan to Care Inspectorate on 26 January 2018. They wrote: Staff file contents checklist updated to include SSSC online check. Contents to be reviewed to ensure consistency.

New employees have settled well into the service and are now more familiar with nursery and playroom routine and have gained sound knowledge and confidence within their job role. A staff training timetable has been implemented and all staff are involved in training courses throughout the year. New staff members will complete their appraisals at the end of their probationary period and appraisals will continue on a six monthly basis, formal appraisal calendar to be implemented.

During our inspection visit on 25 October 2018 we sampled staff files and we looked at the service training plan and their appraisal calendar. We found that new procedures had been introduced to ensure staff files were consistent. Paperwork systems were in place to ensure that safe recruitment procedures were followed. Records of staff training was seen and an appraisal calendar had been introduced. Recommendation is met.

Recommendation 2

The manager should further establish monitoring and ensure that this includes the quality of experiences for the children, the environment, staff practice and record keeping.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14: Well-managed service.

This recommendation was made on 11 January 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service submitted an action plan to Care Inspectorate on 26 January 2018. They wrote: Staff practice and playroom monitoring which includes experiences and environment has been implemented January 2018 and carried out on a monthly basis throughout all age ranges.

During our inspection visit on 25 October 2018 we sampled staff files and we found that the management team had recently introduced a new monitoring system. Recommendation is met.

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

Date	Type	Gradings
22 Nov 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and leadership 4 - Good
9 Dec 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
20 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
17 Dec 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
29 Oct 2009	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
3 Dec 2008	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good

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