

Summarised inspection findings

**Newburgh Pre-School (early learning and
childcare standalone setting)**

Aberdeenshire Council

SEED No: 5241316

10 October 2017

Key contextual information

Newburgh Pre-School (formerly known as Newburgh Playgroup) is in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council.

The setting provides sessional places for Early Learning and Childcare in the following pattern

- One afternoon session for Toddlers aged from two years and not yet three years (known as Toddler Group) **Non Funded**
- Four afternoon sessions (16 hours) for young children aged from two to three years (known as Playgroup) **Funded**
- Five morning sessions for older children aged from three years who are transitioning to school in August 2017 (known as Rising Fives) **Funded**

This arrangement needs to be kept under review to ensure the setting implements provision where parents can choose the timing of their session.

Long established staff team in the setting

Manager/Lead Practitioner	20 years
Practitioner One	10 years
Practitioner Two	9 years

Very supportive Parent Committee .

Principle Teacher support from Aberdeenshire Council.

Scoping Meeting Very Informative.

Meetings

- Parents' Committee, Manager meetings (3), professional dialogue with practitioners.

Playroom Observation By Inspector and Care Inspectorate

- One toddler group PM / two afternoon sessions / two morning sessions.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The vision, values and aims of the setting were reviewed and refreshed in August 2016 by the team and parents committee to ensure they take good account of context of the setting within the community. As part of this, it was agreed to change the name of the setting to reflect their approach to current early learning and childcare for children aged between two years and five years. As a result, there is increased recognition of the setting's quality of care and learning within the local community. Practitioners should now ensure that the aims remain relevant to the group of children and families attending the setting.
- The long established team work well together and are highly committed to delivering a quality service that meets the needs of children and families. The manager takes responsibility for leading development within the setting providing effective support and direction to practitioners. Practitioners are enthusiastic about their individual roles to support children's learning and the important contributions they make to the setting. They have identified additional training needs and support one another to develop their practice. The parents committee provide very good support to the manager and practitioners. Together, relationships of mutual respect and trust have been developed to continually improve outcomes for all involved with the setting.
- There is a culture of reflection within the setting to identify some areas for improvement. The team communicate and work well together to identify priorities for change. This now needs to be more strategic to support development being identified through ongoing self-evaluation using new national guidance How good is our early learning and childcare? With the support from local authority staff, practitioners have explored a few of the key quality indicators to promote discussion about what they do well and what they might improve. There is significant scope to develop this further to identify future priorities taking account of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The setting has an improvement agenda which sets out a number of appropriate priorities. These should now form an annual plan for improvement with specific responsibilities and timescales set out to take forward targeted improvements. Practitioners have implemented many changes in recent months. For example, the improvement in the learning environment which has led to quality outdoor learning experiences for children. In order to demonstrate clear evidence of improvement and the impact of change, the setting should continue developing and evaluating its priorities.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring.

- The ethos and culture of the setting supports a strong commitment to nurturing relationships, as a result of this all children feel valued, safe and secure in the setting.
- A weekly 'toddler' group session is provided within the setting for children aged between two and three years. Practitioners provide an appropriate range of experiences for children to explore and investigate both in and outdoors. Children benefit from sensitive caring relationships with practitioners. Through this, children are gaining confidence in the environment and show enjoyment in their play.
- Children aged between three and five years are confident, enthusiastic and are enjoying their time in the setting. Practitioners provide a good range of learning experiences for children to have fun in learning. The recent changes to the playroom layout is allowing children free access to both in and outdoors to develop further their independence and make decisions about their learning. Almost all children are keen to learn and engage well with the range of learning experiences provided.
- Interactions between practitioners and children are warm and engaging to support children in their learning. They use questioning well to extend children's thinking and understanding. Practitioners are sensitive to the varying needs of children attending the setting and can talk about their progress over time. They observe children at play and make use of weekly meetings to discuss children's individual needs and progress, making good use of observed interests to identify and plan relevant learning contexts. However, they now need to raise their expectations for children's learning to ensure high quality learning experiences with appropriate depth and challenge for the more able children. As outdoor learning continues to develop care should be taken to provide suitably high literacy and numeracy in outdoor play.
- Practitioners have rightly identified the need to explore the most effective way of recording aspects of children's learning. 'Learning journey books' are used to record their observations and knowledge of children. These show evidence of the activities children have been involved in and provide a means for children to discuss and reflect on their learning. Practitioners recognise that these need to be recorded more robustly to inform the identification of next steps. A system for tracking and monitoring needs to be introduced to focus tracking of children's developing skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

- The manager has an awareness of national benchmarks for the early level Curriculum for Excellence. She has an understanding for how this will support practitioners to make more informed judgements about the progress children are making across their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: theme 3 learning and development pathways

- Practitioners meet regularly to identify the current interests of children and plan a range of experiences to take forward their learning. They provide effective learning opportunities for all children both in and outdoors. Practitioners take account of Pre-Birth to Three guidance for younger children and Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes for older children. To take this forward, particular attention should now be given to increasing depth, challenge and progression in children's learning. Practitioners have not yet introduced strong enough systems to track children's progress.
- Transitions into the setting are planned for in a way that takes into account the individual needs of each child and family. Children are invited to spend time in the setting with their parents in order to familiarise themselves with the environment. Practitioners take time to get to know families and provide helpful information to support parents and children at 'settling in' time. Transition between the morning session and afternoon sessions are carefully managed so that they are a positive experience for children and families.
- Children move on to a number of local primary schools and practitioners have developed positive relationships with school colleagues to ensure key information is transferred to the school. Clear reports for children should now be developed to show progress children have made in curricular areas of their learning. Practitioners and teaching staff should continue to work together to ensure a shared approach to developing the early level of Curriculum for Excellence with a clear focus on continuity and progression.

2.7 Partnerships: theme 3 Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- The setting engages with a range of partners from the community to enhance children's learning experiences and awareness of the world around them in, for example, Gala Days and the Community Café. This adds value to the quality of children's experiences.
- Practitioners have established strong links with parents and families in order to improve outcomes for all children. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the setting through a variety of initiatives and events. They have the opportunity to receive feedback about their child's learning both through informal daily conversations and planned meetings.

2.1: Safeguarding

- The setting submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant practitioners and where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality.

- There is a caring ethos with a strong sense of community and family within the setting. The manager and practitioners have worked well to ensure every family is welcomed and valued. Parents spoken with during inspection activity spoke highly about the supportive relationships they have with the manager and practitioners. All practitioners know children and their individual interests, needs and stage of development well. They are alert to the care and wellbeing of all and strive to provide children and families with the support they need. This is helping to promote children's emotional and social wellbeing. Practitioners respect children as individuals with their own needs and rights.
- Children show a high level of awareness of each other and are observed to be kind and caring to their friends. Behaviour is positive with children developing the skills to play and work together.
- The promotion of wellbeing is a key feature of the setting. Practitioners are developing knowledge of Getting It Right For Every Child. As discussed, they should share this with families and work with children to explore the indicators of wellbeing. As this progresses, consideration could be made to visual the chart of the indicators when planning for children, sharing an area of concern or reviewing their development. This good practise will ensure all children are being supported to feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.
- The manager and practitioners have a good awareness of the need to keep up to date with legislation, good practice and national guidance in order to ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties. In particular, the team are very clear of their responsibilities to keep children safe.
- Practitioners are very proactive in seeking appropriate support for children who are experiencing difficulties in their development and learning. They have identified a range of partners and specialists to work in partnership to plan for individualised support. Where appropriate, individual plans and targets are created. These plans are regularly updated with discussion and in partnership with parents. This ensures that children are making the best possible progress. Parents spoke highly about the advice and sensitive approach in which the manager and practitioners supported their children to ensure that their needs were being met.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing
- Children's progress over time
- Overall quality of children's achievement
- Ensuring equity for all children.

- Across the setting, children are making good progress in almost all aspects of their learning and development. They benefit from the good range of quality experiences over time. They are polite well-behaved and show an enthusiasm for learning.
- Toddlers aged two to three years are growing in independence. Practitioners interact well with the young children to promote their early language development. Toddlers participate well in activities and can follow simple instructions as they explore their environment. They are developing a range of physical skills in the outdoor area.
- Children aged three to five years are making good progress in early language and literacy. In conversation with adults and in play children's skills in talking are developing well. They express their ideas clearly and are keen to talk about their learning. Older children demonstrate a broad vocabulary when talking about topics of interest such as caterpillars and butterflies. Almost all children listen well to stories and follow instructions with ease. A few of the older children are at an early stage of mark-making and have a developing understanding that writing has a purpose. They are developing their early writing skills through daily routines such as signing in on arrival to nursery. They would benefit from regular opportunities to further their writing skills through real-life contexts. Practitioners recognise the need to improve their tracking of children's progress in literacy.
- Overall, children are developing a good awareness of number and mathematics. In planned activities and daily routines children are developing an understanding that numbers represent quantities and how to use them to count and put objects in order. Children are developing an awareness of colour, pattern and shape through games and play experiences. The language of measurement is being developed as children explore the outdoors. Practitioners should ensure children are given sufficient opportunities to apply their skills in numeracy and mathematics across different areas in their learning in order to support them to make the best possible progress.
- There is a strong focus on health and wellbeing within the setting and as a result, children are making good progress. Across the setting, most children demonstrate well-developed fine motor skills. In the outdoors, children are enjoying fresh air and developing their physical skills very well through active play. Most children have a good understanding of

healthy choices and how these affect their wellbeing. They can describe foods that are good for you and the importance of routines such as hand washing and tooth brushing.

- Practitioners use praise effectively to recognise children's efforts and achievements. Children's achievements are celebrated in their learning journey books, and in discussions between practitioners and children. Children come to the setting with a wide range of experiences and skills. Practitioners need to ensure achievements recorded contribute to the overall picture of each child's progress building effectively on prior learning.
- The setting values the individual circumstances and family lives of all children. This includes how best to support children who are experiencing changes in their lives. They contact other agencies to support children and families and minimise barriers to learning if required.

Setting choice of QI : 3.3 - Developing Creativity and Skills for Life and Learning

- Developing Creativity
 - Developing Skills for Life and Work
 - Developing Digital Skills
-
- **During this** current session, an improvement priority has been taken forward to improve outdoor space to support creativity, curiosity and inquiry. The play area now offers children potential for interesting and meaningful play and learning. By supporting children to move freely between the playroom and outdoors for almost all of their session the team offer opportunities for children to make their own decisions about where and what they will play with. Children are using the space well, showing developing independence and increasing confidence in their learning.
 - Practitioners, children and parents have been fully involved in deciding how the area would develop and on the provision of more appropriate resources. As a result, the increase in natural open ended resources, loose parts and natural materials is supporting children's creativity and exploratory play.
 - Practitioners ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe and secure. They support children well to help them resolve disagreements when they occasionally arise over sharing space or resources. Older children are learning about being safe by taking turns to carry out simple risk assessments in their outdoor area and are beginning to take some responsibility for tidying the garden.
 - Within the setting children have access to a good range of digital technology. They enjoying taking photographs of one another during their play. A few of the older children were observed in using tablets to create videos of their play and reflect on their learning. There is scope to explore further the use of digital technology to support learning.

1 Quality of care and support

Care Inspectorate grade: good

- Children were provided with a caring and nurturing environment where children had their individual needs recognised and acted upon. Staff were confident when discussing children's development and next steps for learning. The service should develop recording of observations and next steps to be more meaningful and focused on children's learning. This will allow staff to confidently track children's development to enhance opportunities for learning.
- Children were kept safe through staffs knowledge of national child protection guidance. Staff were aware of the services child protection policy and who to contact if they had a concern regarding a child.
- Children's wellbeing needs were being met through staffs confident use of chronologies to log important events that may impact on children's development and wellbeing. Staff reflected on children's individual circumstances to assess supports that may be required to ensure that each child was achieving their full potential.
- Children were cared for by professional staff who worked with partner agencies and parents to ensure there was consistency in meeting children's needs enabling children to be achieving and active.
- Children's learning was challenged and developed to focus on their individual interests. During the inspection a few children were observed in using sticks and other natural materials to create an area for their dinosaurs. The created set was then used to film an activity using a tablet. This encouraged children to explore their passions and empowered children to be responsible for their own learning

2 Quality of environment

Care Inspectorate grade: good

- Children were provided with a bright and secure environment. Children's work was displayed celebrating their achievements and making the environment personal to the children. However, a lot of the work displayed was adult led and discussions were held with practitioners to encourage children to create artwork using their imagination. Through discussions with staff we established that this was an area they were actively looking to develop.
- Children were engaged in the environment around them accessing resources and activities freely. We observed children accessing mark making resources like drawing and writing letters, where at times they were using their imagination to express themselves.
- Children had access to resources which promoted numeracy and counting. However, further development is needed to enhance literacy and numeracy opportunities throughout the service.
- Staff ensured they were positioned to allow children to be independent whilst supporting

them if needed, which encouraged children to be independent in their learning.

- Children were able to be active through accessing the outdoor area. Children enjoyed playing with the mud kitchen mixing dirt and using imaginative play. Children enjoyed natural resources like sticks and stones which they used to invent their own games and take turns when playing. Staff encouraged children to be independent and explore different tools and their uses. Practitioners had risk assessed activities and had a strong focus on ensuring children were safe whilst exploring their capabilities.
- Resources in the outdoor environment could be further developed to encourage opportunities for children. For example the service could develop the use of water play in the garden to explore mixing and moulding of materials.
- Children were involved in their local environment, for example children were able to go to the local schools as part of their transition. This encouraged children to become confident in preparation for school.

3 Quality of staffing

Care Inspectorate grade: good

- Children were cared for by staff that were enthusiastic and caring towards children. Staff were aware of each child's needs and personalities treating each child as an individual. Staff used their knowledge of each child to influence activities specific to each child. However, staff could further develop children's learning through the development of observation and next steps for children.
- Safer recruitment practice was followed. Staff had undergone an induction when they first started with the service and had a valid Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check in place before beginning work with children. Staff were supported through regular appraisals which allowed staff to discuss their development and areas to improve on. Staff were appropriately qualified for their role and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).
- Staff were attending regular staff and committee meetings enabling them to keep up to date with developments in the setting and to be involved in decisions affecting the service.
- Staff accessed core training and reviewed this regularly to ensure they were following the latest guidance. Staff were reflecting on training and how training could develop outcomes for children. Staff further developed their core training through accessing further information that enabled them to provide a high level of care and support for children.
- Staff were sensitive to the needs of children for example staff were aware of family circumstances and how to deal with things in a caring and compassionate manner to ensure all children had equal opportunities to learn and develop.

4 Quality of management and leadership

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

- The service was carrying out regular audit on areas like accidents/incidents, fire drills, hand washing and resources. This ensured staff were reviewing the application of policies and how they protect children. The manager was highlighting areas for development in

response to audits completed. The manager then set a date for the task to be completed.

- Feedback from children and parents was sought through questionnaires, conversations and newsletters. The manager then acted on suggestions and shared progress through email, newsletters and discussions. This allowed the service to develop using input from service users.
- The manager is discussing development ideas with the team to address areas for development. However, the manager should develop their quality assurance systems to ensure ideas are logged and developed.
- Staff monitoring was completed on a basic level to reflect on staffs practice. We discussed with the manager how this could be further developed to influence change in the service. Staff commented that they felt supported and were developing their learning. The manager empowered staff through encouraging staff to take turns at leading learning for the session.
- The manager had recently reviewed the Building the Ambition document and How Good Is Our Learning and Childcare. The manager had a basic understanding and could benefit from further training on these documents to further develop quality assurance in the service.
- Management should further develop their system of quality assurance to improve outcomes for children by monitoring and improving all areas of practice.

The manager was supported by an enthusiastic committee that were focused on the needs of the children and also the needs of the staff working in the service. There was clear communication between staff and the committee to ensure developments in the service were understood and supported by all involved in the service.

To be completed by the Care Inspector and inserted into the letter

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and two recommendations.

Recommendations:

- To ensure the improvements noted at this inspection are maintained, the manager and staff need to continue to develop their practice in relation to Observation, recording and assessing children's development progress.
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 4: Engaging with Children; and Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.
- Management should further develop their system of quality assurance to improve outcomes for children by monitoring and improving all areas of practice.
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 12: Confidence in Staff; Standard 13: Improving the Service.

Particular strengths of the setting

- Caring manager and practitioners who have developed a very welcoming and nurturing environment which enables children and their families to feel supported included and involved in the setting .
- Polite, well-behaved children who are developing independence and increasing confidence in their learning.
- Strong partnership with the parents' committee who are supporting improvement in the setting.
- Changes made to learning environment are resulting in increased opportunities for children to make their own decisions about where and with what they will play. The range of resources and natural and open-ended materials are enabling children to develop skills of curiosity and inquiry in their play.

Agreed areas for improvement for the setting

- Continue to use national self-evaluation and monitoring How Good is Our Learning and Childcare? to identify future priorities taking account of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement.
- A system for tracking and monitoring needs to be introduced to focus tracking of children's developing skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This will ensure children make the best possible progress.
- Ensure all children are suitably challenged in their play and given more opportunities to develop and apply their early literacy and numeracy skills across learning, particularly during outdoor learning experiences.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are confident that the setting has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Aberdeenshire Council will inform parents/carers about the setting's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its settings.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91% – 99%
Most	75% – 90%
Majority	50% – 74%
Minority/Less than half	15 – 49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

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