

Summarised inspection findings

Auchterellon Under Fives

Aberdeenshire Council

4 December 2018

Key contextual information

Auchterellon Under Fives was established in 1982. It is a registered charity and is partly self-funded. The building is owned by parents and carers who together form Auchterellon Under Fives through a committee. The group have recently gone through a period of significant change of parents committee. At the time of inspection, the committee had been in place for four months.

The premises consist of a playroom with a kitchen area, toilets and reception area. The setting also has an enclosed outdoor play area. Playgroup sessions are provided for children aged from three to five years, in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council. Currently three children are funded.

A 'Two's group' offer sessions for children aged from two to three years. This group are self-funding and not in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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 manager and practitioners work well together for the benefit of all children and families. As planned, they should refresh the current vision, values and aims with children, parents and carers and other stakeholders to ensure that they accurately reflect the context and aspirations of Auchterellon Under Fives This refocus will support the setting in addressing current thinking about approaches to early learning and childcare (ELC).
- Overall, strategic direction is required to implement continuous improvement and change. The setting is in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council to provide ELC. Practitioners have developed a good working relationship with an authority principal teacher allocated to support the setting. She provides ongoing advice and guidance with next steps for the manager and practitioners to take forward. Practitioners now need to demonstrate in their day-to-day practice how they are using this advice and support.
- The manager and practitioners are keen to learn. To improve their practice, they are arranging to attend opportunities for continuous professional development provided by Aberdeenshire Council. This will support them to provide children with high quality ELC. It will be helpful to source opportunities for professional learning that closely link to the plans for improvement. To support training, it would be helpful for practitioners to engage with colleagues from other settings. This includes attending network groups to increase their knowledge and understanding of early learning pedagogy.

- The manager and practitioners have made a start to gathering evidence for a few of the quality indicators from How good is our early learning and childcare? There is significant scope to develop this further to enable the team to identify clearly the key priorities of the setting and target important outcomes for children's learning.
- The draft improvement plan for session 2018/19 includes key priorities for the setting. A robust monitoring programme should be developed in order to demonstrate clear evidence of change leading to improvements in provision for children

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience 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

- Children are friendly and building their confidence within the setting. They engage in their play for appropriate periods of time. However, they need to be able to take part in a wider range of learning opportunities across the curriculum each day. Children make some use of a pictorial book to make choices about the resources they want to play with. They would benefit from using a range of natural materials and open-ended resources to support their developing skills in creativity, imaginative and investigative play. Practitioners acknowledge the need to make increased use of national practice guidance such as Building the Ambition. This will support them to explore current best practise in creating quality environments.
- Children benefit from positive relationships with the manager and practitioners. Interactions are based on a warm and caring approach. Practitioners use praise well throughout their interactions. They should now develop their skills to intervene appropriately and consistently in children's play in order to extend and deepen children's learning.
- Using children's interests and ideas practitioners develop floor books to show learning over time. Current interests have included a variety of themes, such as space, seasons and babies.
- The manager and practitioners observe children during free play and use the information gathered to discuss children's playroom experiences. Their observations form the basis of children's personal journals and reflect children's participation in a few learning experiences. Practitioners can talk about children's progress, however, they do not record significant evidence of learning. They should now develop approaches to identify appropriate next steps in learning for individual children.
- Practitioners are not yet tracking and monitoring children's progress. An understanding of the standards and expectations of the early level of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) will ensure consistency of assessment and a more accurate picture of children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- A priority in the annual improvement plan correctly identifies the need to develop a curriculum rationale to reflect the context of the setting. As planned, this should take full account of the design principles of CfE to provide greater depth, choice, challenge and progression in children's learning.
- Practitioners are not yet confident in working with CfE guidelines to provide a range of learning opportunities that are based on play. For younger children, learning is based on Pre-Birth to Three guidance and responsive care. We discussed with practitioners continuity in learning for children between two to three years and three to five years to support children's age and stages of development.
- The setting benefits from secure outdoor grounds which are used to provide learning opportunities, particularly physical play. Children enjoy exploring and experimenting in the mud kitchen. We discussed introducing loose parts play as part of plans for the development of the garden. This will promote problem-solving and investigation through the use of open-ended materials.
- There is scope for literacy and numeracy to be promoted further across the curriculum, in real life contexts both indoors and in outdoor learning.
- The use of digital technology as part of the curriculum is yet to be developed.
- Transition from home into the setting is working well. Parents and children are well supported when they join the setting. As part of this, children are invited to spend time in the setting with their parents in order to build initial relationships with practitioners. Practitioners take time to get to know children and their families. They work with parents to gather important information about children's interests and their care and medical needs. Arrangements to support children who attend the setting on a split placement should now be developed with other providers to focus on continuity in learning and care for individual children. We talked with practitioners about how they might continue to develop transitions from the setting to the local nursery and primary schools. This will ensure continuity of learning across the early level.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- See choice QI.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

weak

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 welcoming and friendly atmosphere within the setting. Practitioners place importance on getting to know children and families well. They greet children warmly and make them feel very welcome.
- Practitioners are at a very early stage of understanding the principles of Getting it right for every child. As such, these are not yet a feature of the setting's approach to securing children's wellbeing. We discussed with the manager, ways to explore the wellbeing indicators with families and children. Once embedded this will support the development of wellbeing that best meets the needs of children.
- The manager, practitioners and parents committee would benefit from attending appropriate training to expand their awareness of current legislation and statutory duties. This would support a clearer understanding of what is expected and how these can be fulfilled. Importantly there is an urgency to put in place an updated child protection and safeguarding of children policy that takes account of national guidelines. Appropriate training should also be identified and delivered. Practitioners have recently reviewed a range of policies and procedures to guide their practice. They must now also ensure these procedures and policies are implemented effectively.
- Children have personal care plans which give useful information on their care needs. However, practitioners need to be vigilant in ensuring processes accurately capture all relevant information about individual children. This will enable them to monitor and plan for children's ongoing wellbeing, care and learning.
- The manager and practitioners create an inclusive atmosphere. They consider children as individuals with unique personalities, circumstances and needs. Where appropriate, practitioners have identified a range of partners and specialists to plan for individualised support.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

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

- At this early point in the school year, all children in the setting are aged three and almost all have joined the setting in the last few weeks. New children will join the setting throughout the school year. However, from dialogue with practitioners, parents and in reviewing previous session documentation we were able to evidence children's progress over time. From this, it is clear that children aged three to five years make satisfactory progress that reflects their age and stage of development, in Auchterellon Under Fives .
- In communication and early language, children are making satisfactory progress through thoughtful one to one interaction and sensitive support from practitioners. As a result, they are learning to interact positively with each other. Children are developing an appropriate vocabulary to communicate with their friends and adults. They can talk with confidence about their learning through specific themes such as dinosaurs and sea creatures. While there is an attractive, cosy book corner area in the setting, children do not readily use this. Practitioners should increase the use of looking at picture books and listening to stories for the development of language skills to support children's learning further. Children show a developing interest in drawing and mark making. This interest should be nurtured through provision of real-life contexts across all areas of the setting.
- Numeracy and mathematics is a current focus of the setting's plan for improvement. Children have opportunities to play with a range of resources, which is enabling them to develop their understanding of shape and colour. They count confidently within five and recognise numerals on logs outdoors. They apply their understanding of number into measurement, for example, counting scoops of ingredients whilst making cheese puffs. There are, however missed opportunities to promote numeracy in a meaningful way for children in routines and activities throughout the day.
- Children are making satisfactory progress in health and wellbeing. They demonstrate an increasing independence in routines such as hand washing and helping to prepare their snack. They are learning to express their feelings and are developing an awareness of the need to regulate their own emotions. Children's physical skills develop well through daily outdoor time.

- Children enjoy creating paintings and pieces of art. A wider range of resources will support improved creativity. Children are aware of changing seasons and how this affects their planting and growing activities. They would benefit from increased access to technology to support skills development.
- Practitioners recognise children's efforts with praise and daily reward stickers. They are beginning to celebrate and record children's achievements from home on the 'growth and achievement tree'.

Setting choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
 - The promotion of partnerships
 - Impact on children and families
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- Building supportive relationships between the manager, practitioners and the recently formed parents committee is developing a partnership approach and sense of community within Auchterellon Under Fives. Together they make decisions about the setting. As part of this, parents have played a significant part in helping the setting to develop an area for children to learn and play outdoors.
 - Families feel very welcome in the setting. They understand and value the contribution of the setting to children's learning. Parents spoken with during inspection activity report positively of the caring, home-like approach and that their children enjoy being at the setting. They value the regular newsletters and weekly social media posts, which practitioners use to keep them informed of current events. Families give good support to the setting through participating in fundraising and community events.
 - Practitioners share information regularly about children's learning through daily contact and informal meetings. They encourage parents to discuss any concerns about their children's development and learning and to share what works in supporting children's learning at home and in the setting. Parents are invited to Stay and Play Days.
 - On request, parents have access to their child's 'My Learning Journey' folders, which contain photographs and comments from practitioners on playroom experiences. Practitioners should develop the use of journals further to ensure parents have a clearer understanding of their child's progress in learning.
 - Practitioners make good use of opportunities to promote engagement within the community. As the setting moves forward with plans to develop further partnerships, it may be helpful to include all partners in the review of its vision, values and aims. This will ensure maximum participation and engagement of all.

1. Quality of care and support

Staff were nurturing, spoke calmly and enjoyed being with the children. Children new to the service were supported to settle with cuddles and kind words. This helped them feel safe with staff.

Staff did not always consider children's privacy and dignity when supporting them with their personal care. Staff should consider ways to ensure children are respected at all times (see Recommendation 1).

Procedures were in place to support the safe administration of medication. We discussed storing a copy of the children's medical care plan with their medication. This will ensure staff have all the information at hand to safely administer medication and deal with any emergencies. This will help keep children safe and well.

Children's personal plans did not contain sufficient information to fully support children's health and wellbeing. There was no recorded information to help staff meet the needs of young children for example when toilet training. Staff discussed how they had worked with other agencies to support children with their communication and language development. However, there was no evidence of how this information was being used to develop clear strategies that would support children and enable staff to effectively evaluate their progress (see Recommendation 2).

Most children were content and played happily with the toys on offer. However, staff interactions did not extend children's learning or encourage them to play in other areas. Staff did not use effective questioning skills to develop curiosity and sustain play. As a result; some children were not stimulated or effectively challenged during the session.

Children's profiles did not show their progress or record individual achievements. There were some observations of the children at play with some next steps; however these were not always meaningful or evaluative. This meant activities were not always planned to support children to progress. Staff should now develop their skills in questioning and in recording and using observations. This will help ensure children are supported to achieve their full potential.

Snack was a positive experience for the children. Children were able to sit and chat with staff who encouraged good manners and supported the children with their self-help skills. Snack menus reflected mostly healthy foods, however children would benefit from being more involved in choosing the snack menu. This would help encourage them to make healthy food choices.

Care Inspectorate grade: weak

2. Quality of environment

The nursery cloakroom was small but welcoming and inviting. Parents were able to access a variety of information displayed on the walls to help keep them informed. However, safety procedures were not always followed to ensure visitors were signed into the service or to ensure the door was locked at all times. This put children at risk of escaping and from strangers entering the building (see Requirement 1).

Daily risk assessments were not effective to ensure the outdoor play equipment was clean and safe; for example the children were at risk of finding animal faeces in the plant tubs. Staff should now encourage the children to become more risk aware and support them to understand the possible risks they may encounter in the garden (see Recommendation 3).

The nursery was welcoming and well maintained. The nursery layout supported children's choice and a variety of toys and games were stored in easily accessible boxes. The role play corner was resourced with some plastic food, plates and cups and a till. The children would benefit from more real life resources to learn through familiar play, develop their ideas and explore their emotions. The story corner was not visited by the children. Staff should now consider how to further engage children with stories and rhymes to help develop their literacy and language skills.

The children enjoyed playing outdoors and were able to run around and play games. Some of the fences and equipment had been recently repainted and the area was colourful and attractive. There was some equipment to help develop children's physical skills such as wheeled toys and climbing equipment. The children enjoyed playing in the mud kitchen and there was some evidence of resources to support numeracy development.

There were limited natural and sensory resources freely available for children to choose both indoors and outdoors. We suggested the nursery develop the range of these types of resources and experiences. This would support children to explore using all their senses and develop their creativity and imagination. Further information can be found in:

My World Outdoors

My Creative Journey

www.thehub.careinspectorate.com

The Loose Parts Toolkit

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/405223/loose-parts-play-toolkit.pdf>

Care Inspectorate grade: weak

3. Quality of staffing

To help safeguard and protect children, all staff were qualified and registered with an appropriate regulatory body.

The manager and staff had worked at the service for a number of years and wanted to do the best for the children and their families in their care. They had formed very positive relationships and parents told us they felt they were supported by staff and found them approachable and friendly. These interactions reassured parents their child was safe and well looked after.

Staff had not undertaken any recent training opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills to help keep children safe, learn and progress. Staff had not attended any network meeting to share good practice and ideas with other services. This meant children were not supported by skilled, competent and trained staff (see Requirement 2).

Staff used praise to help develop children's self-esteem. However, they did not use effective questioning skills to extend children's learning. As a result, children were not encouraged to try new things and be experimental.

Staff did not have the appropriate skills to record meaningful observations, evaluate children's progress and then use this information to inform planning. As a result, children were not being fully supported to progress.

Staff were not always perceptive to children's feelings. Children's dignity and privacy was not always respected, and as a result children were not always happy.

Care Inspectorate grade: weak

4. Quality of management and leadership

The service was provided by a committee of parents to benefit the local community. The committee was in the very early stages of establishment. The new chairperson person was enthusiastic and committed to ensure the playgroup ran smoothly and remained a positive community resource. The chairperson did have a good understanding of her responsibilities but had not organised any meetings as yet. We discussed ways forward for the committee and directed the chairperson to documents and guidance to support them.

The nursery manager and some staff had not attended recent child protection training. An effective and up-to-date policy was not in place to support staff. Chronologies were not used effectively to ensure staff were aware of possible concerns in children's health and wellbeing. This meant children were at risk from harm, neglect and abuse (see Requirement 3).

The nursery manager was not confident in her role. She had not undertaken any training to develop her skills in managing the service and as a result recent improvements had not been made. We discussed the importance of listening to the advice and support given by the principal teacher supporting the service.

Robust quality assurance systems were not sufficient to support a culture of continuous improvement. Regular staff monitoring and supervision had not been undertaken. As a result very little support and guidance had been given to staff to develop and improve their knowledge and skills to ensure positive outcomes for children. Recent annual appraisals had not been undertaken to ensure staff were trained and competent in their role. Therefore staff were not equipped to effectively support children and children's needs were not being met (see Requirement 4).

The manager and staff were aware of the documents 'Building the Ambition' and 'How good is our early learning and childcare?'. These had been used to support self-evaluation of the service

and as a result the book corner had been recently refreshed with some new cushions. The principal teacher for the service had supported the service to develop an improvement plan; however there was limited evidence of this yet impacting on practice. The manager and staff should continue to work with the principal teacher to support improvement to the service.

Care Inspectorate grade: weak

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and one recommendation. From this, one recommendation has not been met. Outstanding issues relating to children's personal plans are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are four requirements and three recommendations.

Requirements

As a result of our findings the Care Inspectorate issued a letter of concern to the provider on 21 September 2018 informing them of the requirements and the timescales for these to be met.

- To ensure children are kept safe, the provider must ensure the premises are safe and secure by 24 September 2018.
This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'My environment is secure and safe'. (HSCS 5.17)
It also complies with Regulation 10 2 (b) (Fitness of Premises) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.
- To ensure children are protected from harm and neglect and that their wellbeing needs are met, the provider must ensure:
 - the manager and staff are knowledgeable and competent in their understanding of protecting children
 - a clear policy and procedure referencing current guidance is in place and that staff understand and follow this
 - the child protection officer is knowledgeable and fully undertakes their responsibilities
By 2 November 2018.This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities'. (HSCS 3.20). 'I am protected from harm because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm.' (HSCS 3.21). It also complies with Regulation 4.1a (Welfare of Users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.
- To ensure children receive high quality early learning and childcare, are kept safe and their wellbeing needs are met, the provider must ensure they are cared for by trained, competent and skilled management and staff by 7 January 2019.
This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state '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)

It also complies with Regulation 9.2 (b) (Fitness of Employees) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.

- To ensure children receive high quality early learning and childcare, are kept safe and their wellbeing needs are met, the provider must:
 - implement a robust and effective quality assurance process.
Promote a culture of continuous improvement by 7 January 2019.
This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)
It also complies with Regulation 3 (Principals) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.

Recommendations

- To ensure children's care and support meet their needs and is right for them, personal plans must be further developed to provide comprehensive and effective information to help ensure staff meet children's needs.
This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as my care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15)
- To ensure children's dignity and privacy is respected, the manager and staff must children are supported with their intimate care in a dignified way at all times.
This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'If I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified manner with my privacy and personal preferences protected'. (HSCS 1.4)
- To ensure children are kept safe and can understand the impact of risky play, staff must:
 - ensure the outdoor area is secure and safe
 - children are involved in assessing the risks before playing outdoors

This ensures that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'My environment is safe and secure'. (HSCS 5.17). 'I am helped to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour and decisions'. (HSCS 2.24)

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.