

# Summarised inspection findings

**Chimes Playgroup (early learning and  
childcare standalone setting)**

**Angus Council**

**SEED No: 9900217**

**23 May 2017**

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

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 long established team have a clear vision for the setting. This, with the aims and values, have recently been reviewed and refreshed. They now reflect the aspirations of the team and current thinking in early learning. This is currently being shared with stakeholders to ensure it becomes a collective vision, values and aims. Where necessary, changes should be made to them to ensure they reflect everyone's aspirations for Chimes Playgroup.
- There is a strong commitment from management and practitioners to continuing to develop and improve the setting. They work very effectively as a team and provide positive role models to children. During the inspection the team engaged well with inspectors to develop their understanding and make improvements.
- The playgroup is in partnership with Angus Council to provide early learning and childcare to children aged between two and five years. Local authority staff are very supportive of the playgroup and this is appreciated by practitioners. There now needs to be more clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure leadership of change is driven by the playgroup, while continuing to be supported by the local authority.
- The manager and practitioners are reflective and work closely together in all aspects of the setting, including improvement. Everyone has leadership responsibilities, such as developing the use of social media, which are embraced enthusiastically. To ensure the continued development of practice and the nurturing of individual talents and interests consideration could be made to creating more formalised remits.
- A positive start has been made to using national frameworks for self-evaluation with practitioners exploring a few of the quality indicators in detail through a planned calendar of activity. This is helping them identify what is working well and what needs to improve. As planned, this should continue to provide, over time, a cycle of self-evaluation. This should help measure the impact of changes made. An appropriate plan for improvement is in place with relevant priorities identified. There is clear evidence of ongoing improvement in these areas.
- Practitioners have worked hard to gather the views of parents and carers through use of 'the thinking tree'. They recognise that they need to continue to find engaging ways of involving families to ensure that the views of everyone involved with the setting are captured. There is scope to increase children's leadership responsibilities to ensure they play the role they are capable of in the leadership of change within the group.

## 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.

- Children are relaxed and settled in playgroup. They confidently approach adults and engage them in their play. Children demonstrate their increasing independence in selecting learning experiences which interest them. Most children are highly motivated and remain engaged in their chosen activities with practitioners using skilled questioning to extend their learning. Practitioners have used national guidance to inform changes to the environment and resources used to support learning. There is an increased focus on open-ended, natural materials that incite curiosity and support problem solving and enquiry. This is having a positive impact on learning. A few children would benefit from further support from practitioners to help them focus. They should consistently build on children's motivation to provide increased challenge and depth in their learning.
- Practitioners are consistently caring, supportive and kind in their interactions with children. They create a nurturing, positive learning environment where children are warmly welcomed. Practitioners take a genuine interest in all children as individuals and have a clear focus on meeting their needs. Children are increasingly independent in dressing themselves to go outdoors, however practitioners should extend this good practice to develop a more enabling environment, for example at snack times and in areas such as art and craft.
- Children's interests are generally used as a starting point for planning, as evidenced in the current interest in rhyming, based on popular stories and extended through verbal and practical experiences. As planned, a more consistent approach to making explicit connections should be made between observations of children's interests, outcomes of children's planning meetings and subsequent planning.
- Practitioners display a helpful monthly overview of what children will be learning. This could be extended further by developing a mind mapping approach which identifies what children already know, what they want to learn followed by what they have learned and how this can be extended. This will build on the existing use of mind maps and provide even more opportunities for children to talk about their learning.
- Children are encouraged to use the tablet computer to record their achievements, however use of digital technologies to support learning is limited. Children would benefit from further use of digital technology as a support for learning.
- Children's folios are very well-developed and contain quality evidence of children's learning throughout their time in the setting. There is a helpful summary of children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing which clearly evidences their progress and next steps. Children take great pride and ownership of their folios and regularly share their

learning at group time. There are, however, limited opportunities to share with parents and extended family unless they spend time in the setting. A more open approach to sending folios home would help develop a meaningful way of involving parents more fully in their children's learning and progress.

- The manager and practitioners use their knowledge of the individual circumstances of children and families to provide appropriate support. A visiting teacher regularly supports children with identified needs and advises practitioners on appropriate support strategies. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are in place for children who have barriers to their learning. They now require more individualised and measurable targets which provide clear guidance to ensure appropriate progress for individual children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: theme 3 learning and development pathways

- Practitioners use children's interests to plan for their learning. They take account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan a broad range of learning experiences. Knowledge of current early years pedagogy is evident. Practitioners encourage creativity and curiosity through the provision of an interesting range of open-ended resources which most children explore with sustained interest.
- Practitioners find local authority guidance for aspects of the curriculum useful and that it supports the planning of challenging learning opportunities. This is helping ensure children make very good progress in their learning. Practitioners would welcome guidance for other curricular areas.
- All practitioners take responsibility for planning for individual children's learning across the curriculum ensuring they maximise opportunities to develop children's early literacy and numeracy skills as they engage in play both indoors and outside. Children have a developing understanding of the national wellbeing indicators which are embedded within the curriculum. This helps ensure children are developing a sound understanding of health and wellbeing.
- There are positive examples of the local community beyond the playgroup being used to enhance learning experiences. These include regular visits to a local supermarket, visits from the local church minister and occasional visits by residents of the local care home help to extend learning. Such opportunities should be developed further to enhance experiences that promote children's understanding of their world both locally, nationally and globally.

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

- Through inspection questionnaires a few parents told us they are keen to view their child's folios more often. These are available in the setting at all times but are not currently available to take home. We discussed with practitioners ways in which parents and carers play an even greater role in creating and sharing the folios which they are keen to implement. Parents have an open invitation to 'stay and play'. Those we spoke to during the inspection reported valuing the opportunity to share their child's playgroup experience and also view their folio.
- The setting has recently established a social media page to share events, learning and useful information with families. This has proved very popular. Building on the security of a closed group page, consideration should be made to establishing ownership of the page under the playgroup rather than through practitioners.

## 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority.

### 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.

- Positive relationships between practitioners and children, children and their peers and practitioners and families underpin the work of the setting. Children are observed to clearly benefit from the positive interactions they have with the adults who care for them. There is a clear focus on the importance of health and wellbeing with this being integral to the work of the setting. Extensive use of national wellbeing indicators support children to develop their understanding of wellbeing and to plan for and assess learning. This is demonstrated through children's folios and attractive displays.
- Practitioners provide positive role models and demonstrate a high level of respect for children. There is a positive, respectful ethos which offers a high level of nurture. Supported by the well-established team, a strong sense of community with shared values exists. Children's behaviour is appropriate to developmental stages. Where necessary, individuals are supported sensitively to develop the necessary skills to show consideration for one another and develop positive relationships.
- Management and practitioners would benefit from support to develop a full understanding of the statutory duties they are required to fulfil. This includes the requirement, within their setting, to have an operational management committee. During this inspection this was highlighted and addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The policies and procedures that support the work of the setting require to be reviewed and refreshed. This should ensure that they fully reflect current thinking in early learning and childcare as well as the good practice already evident in the setting. Consideration could be made to personalising the generic policies provided by the local authority.
- There is a culture of inclusion with practitioners working proactively to ensure equity and that all children make the maximum progress in their learning to fulfil their potential. Practitioners are aware of individual circumstances and treat children as individuals. This information is used carefully to ensure all children receive what they need to thrive and succeed.



### 3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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.

- Children are making very good progress in communication and early language. They enjoy extended conversations with adults, for example sharing their playgroup experiences and their home life and demonstrate their use of a wide range of vocabulary. During story times almost all listen well and demonstrate a depth of knowledge of their favourite authors. This has led to a particular interest in rhyme with most children confidently identifying rhyme and able to create their own combinations of rhyming words. They show excitement and are curious about new, less familiar texts. Listening to texts children are able to predict, ask relevant questions and relate the content to their personal experiences such as holidays. Younger children benefit from the nurture of sharing stories with adults who care for them. Interest in mark making is strong both indoors and out where children enjoy writing their names using a variety of media. Children recognise the link between the written and spoken word.
- In numeracy and mathematics children are making very good progress. A few children show well developed mental agility as they undertake simple addition, including using larger numbers. Number is used in a range of play contexts. This is extended through the development of simple data handling as children record preferences at snack and record simple bar charts to display their findings. The mud kitchen provides opportunities for measurement in context and is further supported by regular baking activities. These experiences are allowing children to apply and develop their skills in interesting and meaningful contexts. Children delight in measuring the distance travelled by toy cars down different gradients of slope outdoors. They are confident in their predictions and comparisons of distances. Younger children who attend the afternoon sessions are also developing an awareness of number and aspects such as sorting, shape and problem solving.
- Through a range of experiences children are developing a very good awareness of health and wellbeing. They are learning to make informed choices, for example as they try new, less familiar foods at snack. When using knives to prepare snack children are able to describe the importance of safety. This awareness of risk and how it can be managed is also evident during outdoor play. Outdoors children develop a range of gross motor skills including balancing. Consideration could be made to increasing the challenge offered through physical play. Younger children are developing their sensory awareness through a range of experiences including handling ice. Such experiences are also skilfully used by practitioners to develop new vocabulary.

- Children's individual learning folios clearly demonstrate the progress children are making in their learning over time. The value added from playgroup experiences is also clear. From observations it is apparent that children are becoming more confident and resilient and this is encouraged. Through the effective use of praise children recognise their successes and at this early stage, are developing the skills and attitudes required to be a life-long learner.
- Children's achievements, particularly beyond the setting, need to be better captured and recorded. This will give an even more holistic view of children's development. Increased parental involvement in children's learning folios could be key to achieving this.
- Practitioners take very good account of the differing circumstances of children and families and work to reduce any potential barriers to learning. They recognise that there is potential to gather and utilise a wider range of data to further support how barriers to learning can be challenged. Interventions could also be more closely monitored to measure the impact of strategies.

## 2.6 Transitions

- Quality of support for children and their families
  - Collaborative planning and delivery
  - Continuity and progression in learning
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- Practitioners work closely with families to support transitions and where appropriate, offer a reduced length of session to better meet the needs of individual children. This ensures that attending the setting remains a positive experience. Shorter sessions are kept under review and times increased when appropriate.
  - Children move onto a number of local schools and practitioners have developed positive relationships with a few. They recognise the need to continue to develop this with a particular focus on ensuring continuity and progression in learning across the early level. Joint working could take place across the year, building on the existing positive visits and events in the summer term. It would be useful to develop a shared pedagogy for the early level in the local area to ensure continuity and progression in learning. The local authority would be a useful support in coordinating this potential development.
  - Pastoral transitions are strong both as children move into the setting and on to the next stage. Information gathered in 'My World' documentation helps provide a holistic view of the child.
  - The setting's policy for transitions needs to be updated to ensure it reflects all transitions children undergo including into and out of the setting as well as the daily transition into the setting.

### 1 Quality of care and support Care Inspectorate grade: good

- We saw that children were fully engaged in learning through their play. Children were happy to attend the playgroup and talked to us positively about their experiences.
- Each child had a 'My World' document in place that was completed through consultation with parents and provided the service with key care information for each child. The service must ensure these are reviewed at regular intervals. A requirement was made.
- Each child benefitted from having a key worker who took responsibility for recording children's achievements and supporting their learning. Children's achievements were recorded well and staff knew each child's key strengths as well as areas for further development. The service had been considering the wellbeing indicators when supporting children. The service should continue to develop this and ensure children understand what this means to them.
- Where children required additional support, staff understood their individual care needs and provided this to a good standard. Children who required additional support had access to an additional Early Years Worker provided by Angus Council. The service should consider extending children's information to include personal risk assessments to demonstrate that they have identified support needs and how these will be met. A recommendation was made.
- Parents had opportunities to be involved in the life of the service by attending open evenings, parents meetings and through the services stay and play sessions. Parents were able to sign up for the stay and play session when they brought their child into the playgroup. The service should ensure all parents/carers are aware of this opportunity.
- The service displayed information on a whiteboard or shared this verbally with parents. Parents felt well informed about the work of the service and that they were able to provide feedback. The service Facebook page saw a high level of interactions with parents who left feedback or liked the information shared.
- Children received a healthy snack accompanied by fruit, milk or water. Children were able to choose when to have their snack during the session. Staff ensured children washed their hands before eating to minimise the spread of germs. We discussed with the staff the importance of remembering to remove their apron before entering the bathroom with children, to minimise the spread of germs. A recommendation was made. Staff should review how snack is provided to maximise the opportunities for children to be independent.

## **2 Quality of environment**

### **Care Inspectorate grade: adequate**

- The service was provided from a church hall in the centre of Forfar. The general accommodation was clean, tidy and in a good state of repair. Children had access to the main hall, kitchen, bathrooms and outdoor play area.
- Children benefitted from having access to good quality resources many of which were open-ended to allow children to develop their imagination. The service had a good range of natural resources for children to explore, learn and play with. The layout of the play space had been carefully planned to meet the needs of the children. Children were very independent in selecting resources and choosing to take part in activities.
- The outdoor play space had been developed well since the last inspection; however, there was still scope for further improvement. Children were restricted in some areas due to them being small; however, there was opportunity for these to be increased such as the digging area. Children had regular opportunities to play outdoors, however the service should consider adopting a free flow model, which would allow children to choose when they played indoors or out.
- Overall children were kept safe within the environment and staff had good practices in place to support this. Accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with parents. Through discussions with the manager it was clear they had a good overview of where accidents were taking place, however there was no formal monitoring procedure in place. In order to identify patterns of accidents the service should develop a system to audit these. A recommendation was made.
- During the inspection, we were made aware of a concern that there was potential for children to open an external door. Although staff closely supervised children, there was still a potential for children to leave the building. A requirement was made.
- We reviewed the services procedure for nappy changing to ensure children's safety and health were promoted. Overall, their procedure was good; however, the service should review these to ensure it follows best practice as detailed in the Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (2015).

## **3 Quality of staffing**

### **Care Inspectorate grade: good**

- A manager, who received support from a deputy manager and an early years practitioner, led the service. The staff team have worked together over a number of years to form a good working relationship. Through our observations of the team, we found them to be very caring and nurturing towards the children in their care.
- We checked that all staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), who regulates the social care workforce in Scotland. The SSSC also check that staff were qualified to an appropriate level in order to carry out their position. The manager has a condition on her registration to gain a suitable qualification and we discussed how she planned to meet this.

- Staff had a good commitment to developing their knowledge and skills through attending a variety of training courses. Angus Council provided the majority of these. Staff had recently undertaken training on autism, supporting children's reading and the management of behaviour. Staff reflected on their training and recorded this within their learning folders. The manager should review these records to ensure they are truly reflective. We signposted the service to the Scottish Social Services Council's reflection guidance which will help develop their reflections further to make them meaningful.
- We discussed with the manager what opportunities staff had to lead on specific aspects of the service or projects. Staff had previously taken responsibility for introducing the mud kitchen to the outdoors and developing the services Facebook page. We feel the service could make more use of the individual skills, knowledge and areas of interests of the staff to develop the service further.
- The manager told us that all staff had received an enhanced disclosure check, although this was some time ago. A new scheme had been introduced to check that staff did not have any convictions that would prevent them from working with children; however, staff were yet to become a member of this scheme. Once staff have joined the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme, we expect that their background check is updated at regular intervals. A requirement was made.

#### **4 Quality of management and leadership**

##### **Care Inspectorate grade: weak**

- While conducting our pre-inspection checks and through discussions with the manager of the service, we identified that there was no committee in place. The Chimes Playgroup Committee were the legal providers of the playgroup. Since there was no provider in place, the service should not have been operating. We discussed this with the manager who told us that it had become difficult to find people to join the committee. We stressed the importance of having a committee in place and asked the manager to speak to parents as a matter of urgency to try to form a committee. A requirement was made. Due to the seriousness of this, we issued this requirement to the provider prior to the publication of this report.
- The service had a quality assurance system in place. This identified what checks the service would conduct on a monthly basis to ensure the service continued to provide good quality care, support and learning. We suggested that the service review their quality assurance processes to including areas such as the auditing of medication, accidents, incidents, risk assessments as well as policies and procedures. Staff could be encouraged to take on specific tasks in relation to quality assurance.
- We reviewed the services policies and procedures and found that they had two separate policy folders. One set had not been reviewed for some time however, the other set were more up to date, but none of these had been adopted by the service. Although the practice we observed was good, it was not consistent with the policies and procedures. A recommendation was made.
- The service made us aware that they were planning to recruit a support worker to assist with the work of the service. We discussed our concerns with the manager that they did not have a recruitment procedure in place and that they were not aware of the updated

recruitment guidance. We did however support the idea of recruiting a support worker and were clear on how this position would support the service. We signposted the service to updated guidance on safe recruitment.

- Parents had provided permission for the service to take photographs of their children, however the permission was not clear as to what the photographs were used for. We suggested the service improve their permissions for photographs as well as creating a social media policy to make it clear how children's photos could be used with social media. A recommendation was made.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and one recommendation, which has been met. As a result of this inspection, there are four requirements and four recommendations.

#### **Requirements:**

- To ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing information is up to date; the provider must update children's records with the parents/carers every six months or sooner if required.  
This is to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI2011/210) Regulation 5(2)(b) Personal Plans  
Timescale for meeting this requirement: By 26 May 2017.
- To ensure children are safe and are unable to leave the building unsupervised, the provider must ensure that all entrances and exits to the building are secure.  
This is to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a) Welfare of users  
Timescale for meeting this requirement: By 28 April 2017.
- You must demonstrate to the Care Inspectorate that Chimes Playgroup Committee is operating in accordance with its written constitution. If there is no committee in place, you must submit an action plan detailing when Chimes Playgroup Committee will operate in accordance with its written constitution.  
This is in order to comply with Section 53(6) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.  
Timescale for meeting this requirement: By 14 April 2017.
- To ensure children are safe, the provider must ensure all staff are a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme and that they are fit to provide care to children.  
This is to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI2011/210) Regulation 9 Fitness of employees.  
Timescale for meeting this requirement: By 30 June 2017.

#### **Recommendations:**

- To ensure children's health, safety and welfare are promoted; an assessment of children's specific additional support needs should be undertaken detailing how these will be met.  
Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16;



Standard 2 – A safe environment  
Standard 3 – Health and wellbeing  
Standard 4 – Engaging with children  
Standard 6 – Support and development

- To ensure children’s health and welfare are promoted, the service should minimise the risk of cross contamination by not wearing their apron while accompanying children to the bathroom to wash their hands prior to snack.  
Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16;  
Standard 2 – A safe environment  
Standard 3 – Health and wellbeing
- To ensure the services policies and procedures reflect the practice carried out by staff, the service should review all policies and procedures and amend these accordingly.  
Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16;  
Standard 14 – Well-managed service.
- To ensure children are kept safe and that parents are fully informed about the use of photographs with social media, the service should develop a clear and detailed policy.  
Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16;  
Standard 2 – A safe environment  
Standard 14 – Well-managed service.

### **Particular strengths of the setting**

- The welcoming and nurturing ethos created by practitioners which helps children feel safe, secure and ready to learn. As a result children are motivated, engaged and making very good progress in their learning.
- Commitment and effort of management and practitioners to secure the ongoing development of the playgroup and provide a quality service to children and families.
- Use of national guidance to inform improvements to the environment and an increase in the use of natural resources. This is encouraging children to be curious, imaginative and solve problems in their play.
- Learning folios which are attractive and provide a clear overview of progress children are making in their learning. Children are proud of their folios and enjoy sharing the contents with others.

### **Agreed areas for improvement for the setting**

- Develop a full understanding of the statutory requirements with which the playgroup must engage and comply with. This should include the formation of a management committee that meets the requirements of the playgroup constitution.
- As planned, continue to develop the work of the playgroup to provide a high quality learning experience for young children.



## **What happens at the end of the inspection?**

We are confident that the setting has the capacity to continue to improve its learning provision for young children. As a result of statutory duties not being fully met we will return to carry out a brief visit within one month of the publication of this report. When we return for this visit we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the setting has made.

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